



**Allegheny College
Library**



**Bought from the
Lucy Prindle Foote
Fund**

WITHDRAWN

LITERARY MEMOIRS OF
THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY

814
W85

BY
GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY



NEW YORK
HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY
1921

LIBRARY
191853

COPYRIGHT, 1921, BY
HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY, INC.



NOTE

I recall old Professor Child urging on me in my college days "writing for bread," and saying I should remember "not all is for immortality, — in literature there are things that are meant to die, just as there are beasts and birds in nature," — words that often recurred to me while compiling this volume. It is a selection from a mass of contributions to the old *Nation* and the old *Atlantic* of my early years, like my first book of criticism (1890); and, to quote the preface of that volume (what is also true of the other reprints of this edition), the papers are given with "little more revision than was necessary to cover unimportant omissions, or to combine, in one or two instances, kindred articles." These papers, however, though "very young" in one sense, and "very old" in another, fairly illustrate the working of what is coming to be called the "old, literary education" in the life of a young writer in my day; and, besides, I hope they may be welcome to the lighter, but still serious-minded hours of students in colleges, and to teachers of literature, as a view of literary affairs in the nineteenth century, though desultory, yet not often to be found in such variety and compactness, nor easily to be come at. And I am satisfied that my old editors, Wendell Phillips Garrison and Thomas Bailey Aldrich — and kinder and more loyal editors no young writer ever had — would be pleased at this late gleaning from the long-abandoned spring wheat-field.

G. E. W.

BEVERLY, October 8, 1920.

23386



CONTENTS

Remarks on Shelley, 3
Sir George Beaumont, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, 31
Thomas Poole and his Friends, 45
The De Quincey Family, 57
Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, 67
The Correspondence of Sir Henry Taylor, 75
Hayward's Correspondence, 91
Thackeray's Letters, 101
Darwin's Life, 107
Dobell's Life and Letters, 121
William Barnes, the Dorsetshire Poet, 127
Mr. Ruskin's Early Years, 135
Carlyle and his Friends, 145
Edward Fitzgerald, 189
Hawthorne, 201
Longfellow, 215
Motley's Correspondence, 227
Bayard Taylor, 239
A Shakespearean Scholar, 249
Colonial Books, 263
Charles Brockden Brown, 275
Lucy Larcom, 283
On the Death of Holmes, 297
Lowell's Addresses, 303

LITERARY MEMOIRS
OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

REMARKS ON SHELLEY

I. HIS CAREER

THE natural charm by which Shelley fascinated his familiar friends lives after him, and has gathered about him for his defense a group of men whose affection for him seems no whit lessened because they never knew him face to face. The one common characteristic prominent in all who have written of him with sympathy, however meager or valuable their individual contributions of praise, criticism, or information, is this sentiment of direct, intimate, intense personal loyalty which he has inspired in them to a degree rare, if not unparalleled, in literary annals. Under the impulse of this strong love, they have championed his cause, until his fame, overshadowed in his own generation by the vigorous worldliness of Byron, and slightly esteemed by nearly all of his craft, has grown world-wide. With the enthusiasts, however, who have aided in bringing about this result, admiration for Shelley's work is a secondary thing; its virtue is blended with and transfused into the nature of Shelley himself, who is the center of their worship. To reveal the fineness and luster of his character, his essential worth throughout that romantic and darkened career of thirty years, is their chief pleasure, and in this, too, they have now won some success, and have partially reversed the popular estimate of the poet as merely an immoral atheist; yet, although some amends have been

made for harsh contemporary criticism, Shelley's name is still for orthodoxy a shibboleth of pious terror and of insult to God. It is still too early to decide whether the modification of the harsh criticism once almost universally bestowed upon Shelley will go on permanently, or whether it is not in some measure due to peculiar results of culture in our own time. Without attempting to prejudice this question, especially in regard to poetic fame, there seems to be, as the cause passes out of the hands of those who knew Shelley personally into the guardianship of the new generation, a tendency toward greater unity of judgment in regard to the larger phases of his character and conduct.

Shelley, as Swinburne said of William Blake, was born into the church of rebels; he was born, also, gentle, loving, and fearless. The dangers to which such a natural endowment would inevitably expose him were aggravated by a misguided education, and by the temper of that feverish and ill-regulated age in which modern reform began. He was in early years first of all a revolter; he would do only what seemed to him best, and in the way which seemed to him best; he took nothing upon authority, he acknowledged no validity in the customs and beliefs which past experience had bequeathed to men; he must examine every conclusion anew, and accept or reject it by the light of his own limited thought and observation; he carried the Protestant spirit to its ultimate extreme—all legal and intellectual results embodied in institutions or in accepted beliefs must show cause to him why they should exist. He was, moreover, in haste; he could not rest in a doubt, he could not suspend his judgment, he could not wait for fuller knowledge. Finding only incomplete or incompetent answers to his

questioning, he leaped to the conclusion that there was no answer. Had he been contented with allowing this spirit to influence only his private creed and conduct, mischief enough was sure to be wrought for him, error and suffering were in store for him in no common degree. But he was not merely building an ideal of life and formulating a rule of living for himself; he had, as he afterward confessed, a passion for reforming the world. He was early in print, and aspired to teach the world before he was well out of his teens — took in his hands, indeed, the regeneration of Ireland through pamphlets, and public eloquence, and personal agitation and supervision. It is easy to dismiss this as the foolish conceit of a boy of talent much given to dreaming. It is easy, too, to dismiss his exile from his home and his expulsion from Oxford as childish obstinacy, disobedience, ingratitude, and presumption; but if there was anything of these faults in him there was also much more made evident in these first trials of his character: there was the capacity for sacrifice, the resolution to be faithful to the truth as he saw it. The beginning of manhood found him in the full sway of immature conviction, and already suffering the penalty. It is not necessary to follow out in detail the development of a life so entered upon. It led him to attack Christianity and to disregard the law of marriage, and this is the sum and substance of his offense. Yet no sign, perhaps, is so indicative of the increased liberality of religion in our time as the attempt which has been made to show that Shelley was essentially Christian, an attempt so common and vigorous that Tre-lawney felt called upon to protest against it. In this spirit Mr. Symonds writes from one extreme: "It is certain that as Christianity passes beyond its medieval phase,

and casts aside the husk of outworn dogmas, it will more and more approximate to Shelley's exposition. Here, and here only, is a vital faith adapted to the conditions of modern thought, indestructible because essential, and fitted to unite instead of separating minds of divers quality"; and Rev. F. W. Robertson, from the other extreme writes: "I cannot help feeling that there was a spirit in poor Shelley's mind which might have assimilated with the spirit of his Redeemer — nay, which I will dare to say was kindred with that spirit, if only his Redeemer had been differently imaged to him. . . . I will not say that a man who by his opposition to God means opposition to a demon, to whom the name of God in his mind is appended, is an enemy of God; . . . change the *name* and I will bid that *character* defiance with you!" A candid examination must show, however, that Trelawney is right; there is no doubt that Shelley rejected altogether what is properly known as Christianity, in youth violently and with hatred, while in later years he came to care less about it. At the same time it is to be remembered that he had seen Christianity only in those forms whose most prominent characteristic is defect in charity and love, which Shelley believed to be the central virtues. Probably he never dissociated the Christian God from the Jewish Jehovah, and his feeling towards him is well illustrated in the terrible indictment he makes against him in reference to Milton's delineation of Satan as one "who, in the cold security of undoubted triumph, inflicts upon his fallen enemy the most horrible punishment, not from any mistaken hope of thereby reforming him, but with the avowed purpose of exasperating him to deserve new torments." It is, therefore, impossible to deny Shelley's atheism; the most that can

be contended for is that in natural piety, in purity of life and motive, in conscientious and unselfish action, Shelley was exceptionally conspicuous.

It is here that the second charge against Shelley has its place. How, it is indignantly asked, was he unselfish, loving, and conscientious, when he left his youthful wife to circumstances which resulted in her suicide, and transferred his devotion to another? Nothing more can be done than to point out the fact that Shelley acted in harmony with his convictions of social duty; that the first marriage was the result of knight-errantry rather than affection, and had become destitute of any pleasure; that Shelley did not desert his wife in such a way as to make her suicide chargeable to him. These considerations do not, it is true, relieve him of condemnation, or remove the really great defect in his moral perception of the responsibility which rested upon him in consequence of a thoughtless and foolish marriage. Yet it is not doubtful that in his life he atoned for his error, if suffering is atonement; from that time a shadow fell upon him which never was removed. It is hard to find heart for reproach when one, whose whole gospel was love, is so cruelly entangled in the unforeseen consequences of his acts that he seems to have wrought the work of hatred.

What, then, under this presentation of the case, remains to be said for that ideal character which those who love Shelley believe to have been his possession? That, beginning life with a theory which left every desire and impulse free course, which imposed no restrictions except those of his own honor and self-respect, which acknowledged no command not proceeding from his own reason, he yet served the truth he saw with entire loyalty and

sincerity of heart; that, making many errors throughout a darkened life, he did not strive by lightness of heart or logical sophistication to avoid their penalties of misery and remorse, but kept them in memory and bore his burden of sorrow courageously; that by intense thought and bitter experience he came at last to find the laws of life and to obey them. He found how impossible it is for the individual to solve the problems put before him, so that he himself grew content to leave many of these in doubt; found how ignorant it was in him to make his own experience the measure of the conditions of general human life, and attempt to reform the world's motives and standards by reference to that experience alone; found how little the individual counts for in life, so that the youth, who with fervid hope took up the regeneration of a whole nation in confidence, came to doubt whether it was worth while for him to write at all, and rated himself far below his friend Byron. These characteristics are the evidence of his strength, sincerity, and rightness of purpose; and through these he worked out an ideal of life and rule of living, which differed much from those of his early days. No ideal intrinsically more powerful in influence or more exalted in virtue has been worked out by men who, like himself, found the old familiar standards rationally inadequate and morally weak. These are the essential elements in Shelley's career, and to them his personal qualities and his daily life give form and color. This, too, is the work of a man framed for self-destruction, against whom circumstances did their worst throughout. The marvel is, not that his life was so broken in private happiness, and his public work so unequal in the worth of its results, but, taking all into account, that he saved so much of his life and

work through his perception of the valuable objects of living, and his clinging to them.

This, too, was the result of the imperfect years of preparation. He had given him only the traditional thirty years which belong to every genius for trial and training before the finished work can be required. He had just recognized the conditions to which he must conform, and was only ready to begin when he died.

II. HIS ACQUAINTANCES.

It is impossible to condense Shelley's Life in a clear way. One turns the pages, and owns for the thousandth time the fascination of Shelley, from the first glimpse of the boy, pressing his face against the window-pane to kiss his sister, to the hot July afternoon when he made his last embarkation, and the summer storm swept the gleaming mountains from his sight; but no art transmits the spell, and the story, clasped between these periods, must be left in its integrity. Shelley lived in solitude, and died before he was thirty years old; but his career involved such variety of scenes, persons, and incidents, was so thick-strewn with interesting episodes, and contained so many perplexed passages, that it is a study by itself, and requires for its mastery an acquaintance with an extensive literature of its own. It were useless to attempt a criticism, or to describe Shelley anew, but some unstudied remarks upon his fortunes in life may be ventured upon.

Must one incur the charge of being supercilious and aristocratic if he acknowledges at once a feeling, after reading Shelley's life, of having been in very disagreeable company? Assuredly no one can rise from the perusal

with a heightened respect for human nature, apart from Shelley. He was born a gentleman; his innate courtesy clothes him with attractiveness, and distinguishes him among his associates as a person of a different kind from them, in his actions and bearing; and the deference which Byron showed to him, it is not unlikely, sprang from a perception of this strain of breeding in him rather than from appreciation of his genius or his nature. In his earliest fellowship with school-friends, for whom he had a kindly regard at Eton and after they went down together to Oxford, though Hogg plainly obscures it, there is a gleam here and there of natural and equal companionship; but this morning ray soon dies out. He was, afterwards, almost uniformly unfortunate in his acquaintances. His life was truly one long and sorrowful disillusion; and in it not the least part was the discovery of how he had been deceived in his judgment of persons.

Hogg was his first example. Shelley became familiar with him at Oxford, and, not content with having him for a bosom friend, wished to make him his brother-in-law. At that time Shelley was in the first crude ferment of his intellectual life, eagerly absorbing the new knowledge which came to him from his indiscriminate reading, and disputing on all the usual topics with vehement and unwearied earnestness, insatiable curiosity, and the delight of a youth who has just made the discovery that he has a mind of his own. His thoughts and letters were mostly polemical; ideal elements of morality were growing up in him, and radical views of conduct getting a hold in his convictions. He was willful, precipitate, and heedless through inexperience; he was thrown the more upon himself, and given a violent turn

toward rebellion, to which he was prone enough, by his expulsion from Oxford, and the senseless attempt of his family to make him suppress his mental and moral life by denying his first dear conclusions. In this state, partly from adventure and restlessness, perhaps, but also from a sense of obligation, the desire to spread his gospel, and by the mere favor of circumstances, he married his first wife, though he knew that his sympathies were more engaged than his heart.

At Edinburgh, whither the pair had gone, Hogg joined them, and with him they returned to York, where Shelley left his wife in his friend's care during a brief necessary absence. Hogg, who appears to have been not so pure as might be wished in his university days, tried to seduce her; and when Shelley came back he learned the facts. He loved Hogg; he was ashamed, he wrote, to tell him how much he loved him; he was grateful to him for having stood by him and shared his expulsion from the college; and he placed the most extravagant estimate upon his abilities. What followed upon the disclosure Shelley himself tells in a letter written at the time: —

“We walked to the fields beyond York. I desired to know fully the account of this affair. I heard it *from him*, and I believe he was sincere. All I can recollect of that terrible day was that I pardoned him — fully, freely pardoned him; that I would still be a friend to him, and hoped soon to convince him how lovely virtue was; that his crime, not himself, was the object of my detestation; that I value a human being not for what it has been, but for what it is; that I hoped the time would come when he would regard his horrible error with as much disgust as I did. He said little; he was pale, terror-struck, remorseful.”

One may smile at this episode, if he be cynical, and has left youth far enough behind; but for all that, there is something pathetic in these sentences of boyish goodness, this simple belief in the moral principles which Shelley had found in his first search, and to which he had given the allegiance of his unworn heart; and in this scene of forgiveness, still confused with the emotions of first friendship betrayed, one perceives the Shelley we know, though he was not yet out of his teens. Some time elapsed before Shelley realized all the incident meant; then he wrote, "I leave him to his fate;" and when they met again in London, the old footing was gone forever.

Godwin, too, affords a capital example of a shattered ideal. He was the Socrates of the young poet, and Shelley, who derived the main articles of his political and social creed from the radical philosopher's great book, was already adoring him as one in the pantheon of the immortal dead, when he learned from Southey that his master and emancipator still walked the earth. He sat down at once and wrote a characteristic epistle, in which he expressed himself with the enthusiasm of a disciple not yet twenty, and respectfully but earnestly besought the living friendship and advice of him whom he regarded as the light of the new age. Godwin was interested, and long and frequent letters, admirable in tone upon both sides, passed between them. The elder endeavored to check the irrepressible activity and eager plans of the young reformer, who had no notion of waiting until he should grow old before setting to work to remake society; and the youth, on his part, exhibited a deference and willingness to be guided such as he never showed before or afterwards. The first modification of Shelley's idea of Godwin came in consequence of their per-

sonal acquaintance, as was natural; but in discovering that Godwin was really an idiosyncratic mortal, as well as an illuminating intellect, Shelley did not yield his admiration for the sage. One can still see the unbounded astonishment of the poet, which Mary Godwin describes, when she told him her father was annoyed by his addressing him as "Mr." instead of "Esq." in directing his letters. They got on very well together, however, until Shelley ran away with Mary — a practical exposition of Godwin's doctrines, which he, having now grown respectable and socially cautious, did not at all relish. Shelley had before this aided Godwin somewhat in financial embarrassments. That philosopher was always in debt; and the young disciple, who, though the heir to a great property, had no way of realizing from it except by selling post-obit bonds, agreed with his master that philosophers have a paramount claim on any money their friends might own. He was willing to discharge his duty by getting Godwin out of debt, or assisting him as far as he could in the matter. When he returned to England with Mary he found that the philosopher would not see or forgive him, and positively declined to correspond except upon the subject of how much money Shelley could give him. Shelley had no thought of not doing his own duty, because of the conduct of other people; and while he felt Godwin's hardness and inconsistency, nevertheless he would relieve that great mind from the little annoyances consequent on borrowing money without providing means of repayment. He, however, was not blind; and what he learned of Godwin in the course of these transactions had a destroying influence upon that ideal of the man which he had formed in his first days of revolutionary hope. In the second year of his life with

Mary he told the philosopher what he thought of the whole matter in a letter which one may be excused for reading with peculiar satisfaction: —

“It has perpetually appeared to me to have been your especial duty to see that, so far as mankind value your good opinion, we were dealt justly by, and that a young family, innocent and benevolent and united, should not be confounded with prostitutes and seducers. My astonishment, and, I will confess, when I have been treated with most hardness and cruelty by you, my indignation, has been extreme, that, knowing as you do my nature, any considerations should have prevailed on you to have been thus harsh and cruel. I lamented also over my ruined hopes of all that your genius once taught me to expect from your virtue, when I found that for yourself, your family, and your creditors you would submit to that communication with me which you once rejected and abhorred, and which no pity for my poverty or sufferings, assumed willingly for you, could avail to extort. Do not talk of *forgiveness* again to me, for my blood boils in my veins, and my gall rises against all that bears the human form, when I think of what I, their benefactor and ardent lover, have endured of enmity and contempt from you and from all mankind.”

The writer was that youth of twenty-three years, of whom Godwin remarks that he knew “that Shelley’s temper was occasionally fiery, resentful, and indignant.” It is true that it was so, and one is pleased to find upon what fit occasions it broke out. Shelley, however, had undertaken a hopeless and endless task in trying to extricate Godwin from debt, and he spent much money, raised at a great sacrifice, in the vain attempt. What he thought of these transactions, when his judgment had

matured, we know from another delightfully plain-spoken letter, written five years later, in answer to renewed importunities: —

“I have given you the amount of a considerable fortune, and have destituted myself, for the purpose of realizing it, of nearly four times the amount. Except for the *good-will* which this transaction seems to have produced between you and me, this money, for any advantage it ever conferred on you, might as well have been thrown into the sea. Had I kept in my own hands this £4,000 or £5,000, and administered it in trust for your permanent advantage, I should indeed have been your benefactor. The error, however, was greater in the man of mature age, extensive experience, and penetrating intellect than in the crude and impetuous boy. Such an error is seldom committed twice.”

But long before this, Shelley, though his estimate of Godwin's powers, in common with that of the people of the time, remained extravagant, had found out the difference between the author of “Political Justice” and Plato and Bacon.

If any one wonders at the extent to which Shelley let himself be fleeced by the philosophical radical of Skinner Street, he should reserve some astonishment for the remainder of the shearers. Shelley, it is to be remembered, was never in possession of his property, and had only a small allowance at first, and a thousand pounds a year after he was twenty-four years old; he was extravagant in his generosity, and gave money with a free hand, whenever he had any, to the poor about him, to his needy friends, and to causes of one kind and another which excited in him his passion for philanthropy. He was, consequently, in his early days, commonly in debt for his

own expenses, and often in danger of arrest and imprisonment. When he mentioned his days of poverty, in that letter to Godwin, it was not a mere phrase; and though a settlement was at last made which provided for him sufficiently, he was never ahead in his savings. Under these circumstances, his biography at times reminds one of the old comedy, with its mob of parasites and legacy-hunters. He was simply victimized by those who could establish any claim on his benevolence. No doubt he gave willingly, with all his heart, to Peacock and Leigh Hunt and the rest, as he did to Godwin, and thought it was his duty as well as his pleasure; but his generosity does not alter the fact that his acquaintances were very dull of conscience in money matters. One begins to relent a little toward Hogg, remembering that he did actually share his own funds with Shelley just after the expulsion from Oxford, when the latter could get no money, owing to his father's displeasure; and for Horace Smith, the banker, who sometimes advanced money to Shelley, and not too much, one has a feeling of amazed respect.

The worst misfortune of Shelley, however, in the friends he made, was to have met and married Harriet Westbrook. The circumstances of their union and its unlucky course and tragical close have lately been for the first time fully set forth. The marriage on Shelley's side was not originally one of love, but it became one of affection. For two years life went on without the discovery of anything to break the happiness of the pair; but after the birth of their first child trouble arose, and rapidly culminated. It is most likely that the sister-in-law, Eliza, who lived with them, was the source of the original dissension by her interference, arbitrariness, and

control of Harriet; but, as Shelley had grown in mind and character, the difference between him and his wife in endowment and in taste was bound to make itself felt, and to put an end to the unity of study and spirit of which he had dreamed; and it is clear enough that she had tired of the studies and the purposes in which Shelley's life consisted, and that though overborne for a time, by his influence, she was now showing herself worldly, frivolous, and weak. She had married the heir to a baronetcy and a fortune, and desired to profit by it. In one way and another she had become hard and unyielding toward Shelley, had made him thoroughly miserable, and, in the earlier months of 1814, was living away from him; and he, on his side, as late as May in that year, as appears from stanzas now first printed, was trying to soften her. While affairs were in this condition he first met Mary Godwin, and he fell passionately in love with her, all the more because of the long strain of dejection and loneliness; and in addition to the story of the dissensions that had arisen in his family, and the difference of character and temperament which had declared itself between his wife and himself, Shelley is said to have told Mary that Harriet had been unfaithful to him. If he did not tell her then, he did afterwards. On what evidence he relied we do not know; nor is there any confirmatory proof from other quarters except a letter of Godwin's written after Harriet's suicide, in which he states the same fact as coming from unquestionable authority unconnected with Shelley. Not long before his death Shelley renewed the charge, though in a veiled and inferential way, in a letter to Southey, in which he defends himself for his conduct in this matter, declares his innocence of any harm done or intended,

refuses to be held responsible for the suicide of Harriet, and practically asserts that he had grounds for divorce, had he chosen to free himself in that way. There is no need to prove that Shelley was right in his belief of his wife's infidelity; but if it be thought that Shelley did in truth believe her guilty, that has much to do with our estimate of his action. He was twenty-two years old, or nearly that, and he held radical views as to the permanence and sacredness of the marriage bond, as also did Mary, who inherited them from her mother. Their decision to unite their lives, under these circumstances, was a practical admission that Shelley's home was in fact broken up, and that he was free to offer, and Mary to accept, not legal union, but a common home, with the expectation and purpose of complete devotion one to the other, in pure spirit and for the ordinary ends of marriage.

Shelley did not proceed secretly. He summoned Harriet, who had not thought of such serious results of her action, to London, and told her what he was going to do. She did not consent to the separation, nor does she seem to have regarded it as final. Shelley had a settlement made for her by the lawyers, provided credit for her, and two weeks after the interview left England with Mary. He wrote to Harriet on the journey, assured her of his affection and his care for her, and indulged a plan that she should live near them, which is, perhaps, the most surprising instance of Shelley's purity of mind, and of the unworldliness or unreality, as one chooses to call it, of his conception of how human life might be lived. On his return he saw her, and agreed to leave the children with her; and when his allowance was fixed at a thousand pounds, he gave orders to honor her drafts for two hun-

dred pounds annually. She had an equal amount from her own family, which had been paid since the beginning of their married life. When Shelley left England the second time, she was thus provided for, one would think, sufficiently. On his return he lost sight of her, and was anxiously inquiring for her, when the news of her suicide reached him. She had put the children, of whom the eldest was three years old, out to board, at a time when he was ill; she had not been permitted to see her father; but the circumstances immediately surrounding her death are not known. Shelley, though he bore his share of natural sorrow for the death of one to whom he had been tenderly attached, did not hold himself guilty of any wrong.

It is no wonder that in the last few years of his life Shelley would not talk of his earlier days, and had a kind of shame in remembering in what ruin his hopes and purposes and the enthusiasm of his youth had fallen; he felt it as an indignity to the nobleness of spirit which, in spite of all his failures, he knew had been his throughout. As we see those years, it is only for himself that we prize them; and it is a pleasure to be enabled to look on them free from that saddening retrospect of his own mind, and observe how natural and simple he really was. No one has ever had the days of his youth so laid open to the common gaze, and this is one charm of his personality, that we know him as a brother or a friend. The pages afford many happy anecdotes; but one can linger here only to mark the constant playfulness of Shelley, which was a bright element in his earlier career and not altogether absent in his Italian life. The passion for floating paper-boats, which he indulged unweariedly, is well known; but at all times he was ready for sport, and

could even trifle with his dearest plans, as in the flotilla of bottles and aerial navy of fire-balloons, all loaded with revolutionary pamphlets, which he sent forth on the Devonshire coast. His running about the little garden, hand in hand with Harriet; his impersonating fabulous monsters with Leigh Hunt's children, who begged him "not to do the horn"; and his favorite sport with his little temporarily adopted Marlow girl, of placing her on the dining-table, and rushing with it across the long room, are instances that readily recur to mind, and illustrate the gaiety and high spirits which really belonged to him, and which perhaps the Serchio last knew when it bore him and his boat on his summer-day voyages. This side of his nature ought to be remembered, as well as that "occasionally fiery, resentful, and indignant" quality which Godwin observed, and the intense and restless practicality of the impatient reformer, when one thinks of Shelley (as he has been too often represented) as only a morbid, sensitive, idealizing poet, of a rather feminine spirit. That portrait of him is untruthful, for he was of a most masculine, active, and naturally joyful nature.

After he left England for the last time, and took up his abode in Italy, principally, it would seem, because of the social reproach and public stigma under which he lived, and by which he felt deeply wronged, he was not really much more fortunate in his company. The immediate reason for the journey was to take Byron's natural daughter, Allegra, to her father at Venice; the mother, Miss Clairmont, went with them, and, as it turned out, continued to be a member of Shelley's family, as she had been since his union with Mary. It is now known that the Shelleys were ignorant of the *liaison*, both when it

began in London, and afterward when they first met Byron at Geneva; but Shelley had a warm affection for Miss Clairmont, whose friendliness appealed to his sympathy, and he spent much time in Italy in trying to make Byron do his duty toward Allegra, and to soften the ill-nature of her parents toward each other. Byron's conduct in this matter was a powerful element in generating in Shelley that thorough contempt he expressed for the former as a man. But though Shelley's most winning qualities are to be observed, and his tact was conspicuously called forth by their negotiations in regard to the child, yet the connection with Miss Clairmont was unfortunate. That it repeatedly drew scandal upon him was a minor matter; it was of more consequence that in his family she was a disturbing element, and Mary, who had disliked to have her as an inmate almost from the first, finally insisted on her withdrawal, but not until frequent disagreements had sadly marred the peace of Shelley's home. Mary, indeed, was not perfect, any more than other very young wives; and by her jealousies, and yet more, it seems, by her attempts to make Shelley conform to the world, especially in the last year or two, she tried and harassed him; and so it came about that his love took the form of tenderness of her welfare and feelings, and often of despondency for himself. Miss Clairmont was a source of continual trouble for him in many ways: she was of an unhappy temperament and hard to live with; but with his long-enduring and charitable disposition, and his extraordinary tenacity in attachment, and perfect readiness to admit the least obligation upon him, proceeding from any one in trouble, he never wavered in his devotion to her interests and care for her happiness. It is a curious fact that Miss Clair-

mont, who lived to be very old, manipulated the written records of this portion of her life, so that her evidence is of very questionable worth, though better, one hopes, than that of her mother, the second Mrs. Godwin, whose lying about the Shelleys was of the most wholesale and conscienceless kind.

As with Miss Clairmont, so in a less degree with others of the Italian circle. But enough has been said of the character of the people whom Shelley knew. It cannot be that they cut so poor a figure because of Shelley's presence, hard as the contrast of common human nature must be with him. It is observable, and it is in some sort a test, that he did not overvalue them. Hogg, Peacock, and Medwin were all deceived, if they thought he trusted them or held them closer than mere friendly acquaintances; there is no evidence that he felt for Williams or Trelawney any more than an affectionate good will; toward Leigh Hunt he had the kindest feeling of gratitude and of respect, and for Gisborne and Reveley a warm cordiality, but nothing more. Mary he loved, though with full knowledge of her weaknesses, in a manly way; for Miss Clairmont he had a true affection; and he recognized poetically a womanly attractiveness in Mrs. Williams, who seems to have represented to him the spirit of restfulness and peace, in the last months of his life. But at the end, his errors respecting men and things being swept away, his ideals removed into the eternal world, and his disillusion complete, the most abiding impression is of the loneliness in which he found himself; and remembering this, one forgets the companions he had upon his journey, and fastens attention more closely upon the man through whose genius that journey has become one of undying memory.

There is no thought of eulogizing him in saying that he represents the ideal of personal and social aspiration, of the love of beauty and of virtue equally, and of the hope of eradicating misery from the world; hence springs in large measure his hold on young hearts, on those who value the spirit above all else and do not confine their recognition of it within too narrow bounds, and on all who are believers in the reform of the world by human agencies. He represents this ideal of aspiration in its most impassioned form; and in his life one reads the saddest history of disillusion. It is because, in the course of this, he abated no whit of his lifelong hope, did not change his practice of virtue, and never yielded his perfect faith in the supreme power of love, both in human life and in the universe, that his name has become above all price to those over whom his influence extends. It is, perhaps, more as a man than as a poet merely that he is beloved; the shadows upon his reputation, as one approaches nearer, are burnt away in light; and he is the more honored, the more he is known. For it would be wrong to close even these informal remarks without expressing dissent from the assumption that Shelley's intellectual and moral life was one long mistake. Disillusion it was, and the nature of it has been indicated by the single point of his acquaintances; but a life of disillusion and one of mere mistake are not to be confounded together. Better fortune cannot be asked for a youth than that he should conceive life nobly, and, in finding wherein it falls short, should yet not fall short himself of his ideal beyond what may be forgiven to human frailty. Shelley's misconceptions were the conditions of his living the ideal life at all, and differed from those of other youths in face of an untried world only

by their moral elevation, passion, and essential nobleness; he matured as other men do by time and growth and experience, and he suffered much by the peculiar circumstances of his fate; but in the issue the substance of error in his life was less than it seems. Shelley, at least, never admitted he had been wrong in the essential doctrines of his creed and the motives of his acts, though he had been deceived in regard to human nature and what was possible to it in society.

III. HIS ITALIAN LETTERS.

The prose work of Shelley has remained in the obscurity which it once shared with his poetry. The formal essays, which concern the transitory affairs of the world or themes of thought remote through their generality, are valued, even by admirers of Shelley, mainly as *media* of his spirit; the familiar letters, scattered in old books, or collected only in a costly edition, and deprived of interest effectiveness because those of high and enduring interest have never been selected and massed until recently, have escaped any wide public attention; even the translations have been neglected. All this really large body of prose, however exalted by its informing enthusiasm, however exquisite in language, and melodious, lies outside the open pathways of literature. It is this fact which gave the element of surprise to what Mr. Arnold called his doubt "whether Shelley's delightful "Essays and Letters," which deserve to be far more read than they are now, will not resist the wear and tear of time better, and finally come to stand higher, than his poetry," — a judgment which well deserved Dr. Garnett's quiet rejoinder that "this deliverance will be weighed by

those to whose lot it may fall to determine Mr. Arnold's own place as a critic." Dr. Garnett adds that, in an age when all letters approximate to the ideal set by men of business, Shelley's alone, among those of his time, rank with Gray's, Pope's, Cowper's, or Walpole's in possessing a certain classical impress similar to that of deliberate artistic work; and, secondly, that they exhibit the mind of the poet as clearly as Marlborough's do the mind of the general, or Macaulay's the mind of the man of letters. Their two prime qualities are beauty of form and transparency; fitness of words, sweetness of cadence, modulation of feeling in immediate response to thought and image, all conspiring to make up perfection of utterance, are continually present, but not through erasure and elaboration. Shelley's self-training in literature, almost unrivaled as an apprenticeship in its length and continuity, more comprehensive, profound, and ardent than Pope's, more vital than Milton's, had made such literary lucidity and grace the habit of his pen, and he was fortunate in employing his gift upon subjects intrinsically most interesting to cultivated men: upon the art and landscape of Italy, or his own always high human relations, or his poetic moods.

In what he says of statues and paintings he shows but slight knowledge of art. The keenness of his perceptions and the warmth of his feelings made him particularly open to sensuous effects, so that in general he worships the later schools. In painting, especially, he can hardly be considered a safe guide for others, because his praise or censure is largely dependent on his temperament for its justification: a picture which is consonant with his own imagination, and stirs it, is thereby raised and glorified, but one whose theme would have been differently de-

veloped by himself is at once made pale by contrast with the quick visions of his own vividly pictorial mind. Here is a portion of his description of a Christ Beatified:—

“The countenance is heavy, as it were, with the rapture of the spirit; the lips parted, but scarcely parted, with the breath of intense but regulated passion; the eyes are calm and benignant; the whole features harmonized in majesty and sweetness.”

One cannot but feel that the face which Shelley thus summons up before us bears the same relation to the original as what the dull-minded call his plagiarisms from Lodge do to that poet's lyrics. Shelley often paints the picture over upon the outlines of the old canvas; but this transforming or penetrating power, as it will be differently named just as one believes the given picture to lack or possess what Shelley saw in it, lends such passages not only surpassing beauty, but a real value as interpretations of art. Much as Ruskin would differ from Shelley's judgments, the two are essentially similar in their mode of treatment, and in their faculty of giving the equivalent of form and color in eloquence.

The description of landscape, which is another principal topic, possesses even more plainly classic beauty. Whether Shelley writes of nature in her wild and picturesque scenes, or where the presence of man has added pathos or dignity to her loveliness; whether he flashes the view upon us in one perfect line, or unfolds it slowly in unconfused detail, he displays the highest power in this field of literature. This view from the Forum of Pompeii, which, instead of being robed with “the gray veil of his own words,” seems filled with “the purple noon's transparent light,” cannot be surpassed as speech at once familiar and noble: —

“At the upper end, supported on an elevated platform, stands the temple of Jupiter. Under the colonnade of its portico we sate, and pulled out our oranges, and figs, and bread, and medlars — sorry fare, you will say — and rested to eat. Here was a magnificent spectacle. Above and between the multitudinous shafts of the sun-shining columns was seen the sea, reflecting the purple noon of heaven above it, and supporting, as it were, on its line the dark, lofty mountains of Sorrento, of a blue inexpressibly deep, and tinged toward their summits with streaks of new-fallen snow. Between was one small green island. To the right was Capreæ, Inarime, Prochyta, and Misenum. Behind was the single summit of Vesuvius, rolling forth volumes of thick white smoke, whose foam-like column was sometimes darted into the clear dark sky, and fell in little streaks along the wind. Between Vesuvius and the nearer mountains, as through a chasm, was seen the main line of the loftiest Apennines to the east. The day was radiant and warm. Every now and then we heard subterranean thunder of Vesuvius; its distant, deep peals seemed to shake the very air and light of day, which interpenetrated our frames with the sullen and tremendous sound.”

Thus he wrote when merely passive to nature's influences; but when he begins to think he irradiates the scene; he lifts it with his aspiration and softens it with his regret; he brings it near by reminiscences of the English fields and cliffs and streams; he informs it with the large interests of the intellectual life; and not infrequently he concludes with a passage which, in the arrangement of its images, the sequence of its thought and feeling, the unity of its effect, in all except metrical structure, is a poem. Many paragraphs might be cited

which show the character of his genius as directly as do his verses, and which justify the claim advanced for them as having the permanent interest of ideal beauty.

The principal charm of these letters, however, as Dr. Garnett says, is not artistic, but moral. It is not meant to refer by this term to the practical morality of Shelley's deeds, or to his conscientiousness, humanity, self-sacrifice, or other such qualities as they are here displayed; of these there is no longer need to speak. Nor is it meant simply to express the gratification one feels at finding that Shelley, unlike many men of letters who disappoint us by being only common mortals in private life, never falls below our conception of him, indicative as it is of his purity that his "unpremeditated song" does not fail to reach the height of his great argument. What impresses one most is rather the character of the life itself, of the mind to which "trust in all things high came natural," that moved with equal ease among the things of beauty, on the heights of thoughts, or amid the common and trivial cares of household life and in the offices of friendship, and knew no difference in the level of his life, so single was his nature and so completely expressed in all he did. In the most ideal passages, in those most impersonal, one does not lose the sense of friendliness in them, of the sweet human relationship which underlies the telling of what he has to say, and keeps the letters in their appropriate sphere. They are not rhapsodies, or soliloquies, or disquisitions; in other words, the visitations of the spirit that came to Shelley, and left record of themselves in this beauty and eloquence and imaginative passion, did not isolate him even momentarily, and could not sever him from his friends. Who these were, we know well enough: Miss Hitchener, the blue-

stocking; Hogg, the betrayer; the Williams and Gisbornes, who seem to have belonged to the class of people known as satisfying; Peacock, who, with all his nympholepsy, was a born beef-eater; Smith, the obliging; Hunt, the "wren," and Byron, the "eagle," in Shelley's nomenclature — the too fortunate people who knew Shelley and whom he loved. They formed the environment, which needs to be kept in mind by any who would estimate Shelley's moral power; amid them he lived his high life and made it theirs, in the case of the most, during their communion with him. In a vague analogical way he sometimes brings to mind the Greek gods, who, with all their divine attributes of beauty, power, dignity, were singular among deities for their companionableness; Shelley had that divine quality of being familiar and retaining his original brightness. Toward Byron alone does he show any repulsion; he recognized Byron's admirable qualities, but he was alienated by the latter's selfishness, worldliness, and earthliness, even while he kept terms of amity. Shelley's sentence on Byron is most serious evidence against him, and it is now supported by much that Shelley could not have known; but it need not be discussed here.

It is especially fortunate that the letters exhibit him after his boyhood, with its false starts, its follies and prejudices, its narrowness and confusion, was passed; of that time we get only a noble echo in his sad remembrance, amid his seeming failure, of the lofty purpose with which he had entered life, while we see the depth unconfused by the tumult of his soul. In these last years, it is true, the thwarting of his practical instinct was ending in hopelessness; but if the earthly paradise that was the faith of his youth was now fading away,

he was lifting his eyes to the city in the heavens, and had acknowledged the vanity of seeking the ideal he knew, except in the eternal; he had worked out his salvation. Perhaps after all we do wrong to lament his death; with that tragedy, in which every thought of Shelley involuntarily concludes, his work as a quickener of the spirit was accomplished. More finished works of art he might have given to us; he could not have left a nobler or more enkindling memory. These letters help in the still necessary labor of clearing away the misconceptions concerning him. In them one sees him only in the quiet of his soul, and will come to a better knowledge and perhaps a higher truth concerning him than is possible by reading his changeful poems alone.

SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, COLERIDGE, AND WORDSWORTH

SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT appears to have been one of the most agreeable of men. He had not merely high breeding, but humanity of disposition, delightful companionableness, and the refinement that springs from artistic pursuits. Haydon accuses his manners of a want of moral courage. "What his taste dictated to be right, he would shrink from asserting if it shocked the prejudices of others or put himself to a moment's inconvenience," was the fault that this critic had in mind; but this is only to class him with the men who do not think that the truth is always to be spoken in society, and prefer tact to an aggressive egotism. Sir Humphry Davy notices especially that he was a "remarkably *sensible* man, which I mention because it *is* somewhat remarkable in a painter of genius who is at the same time a man of rank and an exceedingly amusing companion." Southey was struck by the apparent happiness of his life, and the absence of any reference to afflictions or anxieties that he might have experienced, and says that he "had as little liking for country sports as for public business of any kind," being absorbed by art and nature; and, to add Scott's kind words of him in his diary, that excellent judge writes, "Sir George Beaumont's dead; by far the most sensible and pleasing man I ever knew. Kind, too, in his nature, and generous — gentle in society, and of those mild manners which tend to soften the causticity of the general

London tone of persiflage and personal satire. I am very sorry — as much as it is in my nature to be — for one whom I could see but seldom.” This is a concert of praise which it is a pleasure to associate with the name of the man who was, chiefly, the founder of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square.

He was a friend of the artists of his time, and a patron of Wilkie and Haydon when they needed aid. In the latter’s autobiography there is a bright account of a fortnight’s visit paid by these two to Coleorton, Sir George’s country-seat, which brings the interior life there vividly to the eye, though it borrows something from the unconscious humor of the narrator, who always fills the scene with himself in the leading part. One pauses to note a characteristic sentence of the incorrigible beggar in which he breaks out with the indignant remark, “All my friends were always advising me what to do instead of advising the Government what to do for me.” Sir George, however, had other friends, and most noteworthy of all, Wordsworth, of whom he first heard from Coleridge. Before meeting him, understanding that the two friends wished to live in the same neighborhood, he bought and presented to Wordsworth the little property of Applethwaite near Greta Hall, Coleridge’s abode. Wordsworth never used the ground for the purpose for which it was given, but it remained in his possession. From this time, 1803, a close friendship grew up between his family at Grasmere and the one at Coleorton, grounded upon common interests and cemented with mutual exchanges of kindness and regard, so that it survived until the death of Sir George and Lady Beaumont, herself an excellent woman, of whom Crabb Robinson wrote “She is a gentlewoman of

great sweetness and dignity, I should think among the most interesting persons in the country."

Of the two poets Coleridge was at first more intimate with the Beaumonts. This was in 1803, the period of his illness, just previous to the voyage to Malta. The letters he wrote are very painful to read. The subject is usually the ego; and in reading the apologies of the writer for treating of this ever-present theme, and his observations on his own lack of vanity and the danger he is in of undervaluing his powers and works, one can scarcely fail to be struck by the identity in many respects of the egotism of the overweening and of the self-depreciating kinds. The aspects are different, but the weakness has the same root. In Coleridge it was, perhaps, no more than a question of the state of his stomach whether his assiduous interest in himself should result in intellectual pride or in self-abasement; but without giving too severe a touch, it is clear enough that his eye, when fixed on himself, was on the wrong object.

The letters to the Beaumonts are characterized by this complaining and absorbing egotism of the invalid, unfortified by patience, resolution, or even self-respect. The ravages of disease in its physical aspects, the laying bare of bodily conditions and symptoms of decay, would be in themselves intolerably disagreeable, but it is much worse to be obliged to attend at the sick-bed of the mind; and in Coleridge's case the internal weakness of the spirit excites the greatest pity, and this feeling nearly passes involuntarily into disgust. The sensibility of his nervous organization was acute. He speaks of times when, as he was accusing himself of insensibility through incapacity to feel, his "whole frame has gone *crash*, as it were." Under the excitement of his emotions, he

dissolves in weakness; the spectacle is not a pleasant one; there is something almost ignoble in such loss of self-control. When Wordsworth recited to him, if one can fancy such a thing, the entire thirteen books on the growth of his own mind, in 1807, Coleridge composed a poem, not very coherent or noble, though with personal pathos, in which he says that when he rose from his seat, he "found himself in prayer." It was apparently not an unusual termination to the access of emotion, and it occurred more than once in his relations with the Beaumonts. The mention of it, however, in his correspondence with them, offends one, not in itself, but by the manner of it; indeed, the manner of his earlier letters is indescribable. Their sentiment is so tremulous and overwrought with fever that they resemble maundering; they are "sicklied o'er" with mental disease, and belong to the pathology of genius.

One long epistle, in which he devotes himself to an analysis of his mental condition at the time when he was what is now known as a Social Democrat, shows by an eminent example in what ways the minds of young men of enthusiasm, who have caught the contagion of new ideas, commonly act, and how their tongues are kept going. Coleridge and Southey were rampant young radicals for about ten months, and might many times have been justly thrown into jail for the use of unlawful language and seditiously fomenting the passions of the people. Coleridge ascribes the beginning of his ramblings from the true path of respectable politics partly to his intellectual isolation among his relatives and virtuous acquaintances generally, who thought that his "opinions were the drivel of a babe, but the guilt attached to them—this was the gray hair and rigid

muscle of inveterate depravity;" and partly, he declares, it was due to the thirst for kindness planted in himself, in the "*me*, who," he says, "from my childhood have had no avarice, no ambition, whose very vanity in my vainest moments was nine-tenths of it the desire and delight and necessity of loving and of being beloved," — needs which he found satisfied in the welcome and company of "the Democrats." So he fell among evil companions. On becoming an agitator upon the platform he succumbed to the temptations of the fluent speaker, gifted "with an ebullient fancy, a flowing utterance, a light and dancing heart, and a disposition to catch time by the very rapidity of my own motion, and to speak vehemently from mere verbal associations; choosing sentences and sentiments for the very reason which would have made me recoil with a dying away of the heart and unutterable horror from the actions expressed in such sentiments and sentences, namely, because they were wild and original, and vehement and fantastic." Here is a choice specimen of his eloquence, on the occasion of a supper by some lord, to commemorate an Austrian victory: "This is a true Lord's Supper in the communion of darkness! This is a Eucharist of Hell! a sacrament of misery! over each morsel and each drop of which the spirit of some murdered innocent cries aloud to God, This is my body! and this is my blood!" There is one sin against society, however, which he declined to commit, and he took great credit to himself for his obstinate refusal. He joined no party, club, or any of the radical societies, which he characterizes as "ascarides in the bowels of the state, subsisting on the weakness and diseasedness, and having for their final object the death of that state, whose life had been their

birth and growth, and continued to be their soul nourishment." He remained outside of these entangling alliances, a free-lance speechifier, in the condition of mind of the willing martyr: "The very clank of the chains that were to be put about my limbs would not at that time have deterred me from a strong phrase or striking metaphor, although I had had no other inducement to the use of the same except the wantonness of luxuriant imagination, and my aversion to abstain from anything simply because it was dangerous." Such was Coleridge at twenty-four years — the age at which Emmett was executed; whose death called out this long letter of reminiscences concerning his own career as an agitator, and of reflections upon the impulses and justification of revolutionary orators, their temptations, errors, and illusions. He understood the fate of Emmett with greater clearness because of this little episode in his own life, and it is noticeable that he has the grace not to think that the young patriot's career bore too much resemblance to his own; but this confession of his foolishness in general, spread out somewhat magniloquently before the eyes of his aristocratic correspondent, is a lesson in human nature well worth a moment's attention from conservative and orderly people.

Coleridge's career — if a brief digression may be pardoned here — was only too much in keeping with the temperament of these letters to the Beaumonts. Wherever one comes upon it in the memoirs of the time, the story is the same. Soften it as we may, that career was one of those, too frequent among men of letters, that can never be told, so marred by disease and by moral feebleness, so full of shame and supineness and waste, that it must be kept out of sight. During the years

of his maturity he was a broken man, and knew himself to be such; from the time that, in becoming the victim of opium, he lost what little will-power was originally his, he felt that the spirit of imagination had left his house of life, and in its place was henceforward

“Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain,
And genius given, and knowledge won in vain;”

and in this mood of pervading despondency he seems always in fancy to be haunting the grave of his dead self. This consciousness of his loss, though it had more of the stupor of despair than of the sharpness of penitence, lends some impressiveness to his story; but this pain was not searching enough to save him for himself, nor of a kind to make men oblivious of those violent contrasts in his life which offend our sense of rightness. It is a morally confusing spectacle to see genius professing the highest knowledge of the secret things of God, but itself wrecked; and it requires something more than the poet's sorrow at the withering of his wreath to reconcile such an antithesis.

Then, too, although Coleridge's poetic imagination undoubtedly was quenched at once, or gave out only brief and random flashes in his manhood, it may well be questioned whether the waste of his faculties was not due quite as much to mismanagement of the mind as to the palsy of his powers of effort, purpose, or orderly reduction of thought. He lived in the period of universal philosophers, and in his study of metaphysics and theology in Germany he must have fixed in his mind the habit of including the *omne scibile* in his system. This was the more easy for him, as he had in unusual proportion that false comprehensiveness

which seizes on knowledge, not by all its relations as it stands in the body of science, but by some particular relation which it may seem to bear, truly or untruly, to some preconceived idea that has been taken as the organizing principle of the new scheme. It is because of their common participation in this method that poetry and philosophy, in the old sense, approach so much nearer each other than either does to science. It is plain to any one who reads the topics of Coleridge's discourses that his mind ranged through a vast circuit of knowledge habitually, but also that it touched the facts only at single points and superficially; in other words, he displays compass rather than grasp. In dealing with the mass of his learning, he showed no lack of systematizing power, though it may easily be believed that in conversation with chance visitors the fine filaments of logical connection escaped their sight. The trouble was in the original mode of elaborating the system — the old Greek way of philosophizing by subtle manipulation of analogies, convenient facts, half-understood harmonies of this with that, arbitrary constructions, with now and then a dead plunge into the unfathomable. To borrow Coleridge's own distinction, this procedure is to logic what fancy is to the imagination — a freak of the mind partly out of relation to the truth of things. It is the modern form of scholasticism.

Coleridge, however, whose speculative powers were thus employed, is believed to have been a great light to those who had eyes to see. What particular truth Maurice and others derived from him is, nevertheless, not evident. He shared the awakening power that idealists possess, generally in proportion to their consistency and the intensity of their personal conviction.

Idealism, by the very fact that it is an enfranchisement from sense, is a tonic to the mind; it quickens the activity of thought and facilitates its process because it assumes the mastery of the universe, and makes reality pliable to its hand. This may or may not be lawful, but it generates a feeling of command and of liberty highly favorable to spiritual development. To some men impressionable on that side of their nature Coleridge was the giver of this freedom, and this has been the case especially with members of the clergy who are closely attached to theological dogma. Such persons found in Coleridge's mind the rare and curious coexistence of fixed dogma with incessant speculation: he afforded the sense of untrammelled investigation without once disturbing the certainty of the prejudged cause. This phantom of liberalism was a very quieting tutelar genius to some educated men, who thus kept up a semblance of thinking; but influence of this sort is necessarily transitory. His Scriptural renderings of philosophy give place to those of other theologians, who rationalize on new grounds of scientific knowledge instead of German metaphysics, while the stimulation that was furnished by his idealism may be more simply and directly derived from less involved and abstruse thinkers. His theology and metaphysics, in pursuit of which he wasted his powers, are already seen to be transient. On the other hand, his criticism has articulated the works of minor authors who have themselves written in a formal style, nor has its influence been harmed by its frequent over-refinement and fancifulness; and his poetry has remained untouched by time. It belongs to the period of his early enthusiasm, before he had become too dulled for the breath of inspiration to kindle him; and fortu-

nately one can read nearly all the best of it without a thought of the dreary after-life of the poet, which has no vital interest to any one except as an illustration of prolonged failure due to many causes, but not less to a lack of mental than of moral self-government. He infiltrated a peculiar intellectual life into the clergy of his time, but in them it came to nothing more tangible and permanent than in himself. Will it be long before Carlyle's picture of the Seer at Highgate will be the only supplement to "The Ancient Mariner," so far as the general knowledge of Coleridge is concerned, and all between nothing but the weariness of the opium-eater's hiding?

Perhaps the serenity of Wordsworth's home at Grasmere gains by the miserable contrast. Thither Coleridge came for invigoration; thither, when he finally separated from his wife, he brought or sent the children; and when he could not or would not retire to the hospitality and pleasant companionship of the household where he found the feminine sympathy which he had failed of in his own marriage, Wordsworth would set out to visit him with moral support and cheer. A different interest united Wordsworth and Sir George Beaumont; it was the love of nature. Landscape was the subject of their thoughts. Sir George painted it, Wordsworth poetized it; in the life of both it was a permanent resource to which they constantly resorted, and they liked to blend their work in this solvent — the pictures of the one becoming a text for the poems of the other, and *vice versa*. The interest Wordsworth felt in landscape gardening, in modifying wild nature, and his ideas regarding the methods and aims of the art, are brought out by the part he had in planning the grounds at Coleorton. Sir George

rebuilt these, and, in laying out the winter garden in particular, he had frequent recourse to the taste of his friend; and as Wordsworth was that year occupying the old farmhouse on the estate, the business of thinking out and overseeing this work was at once diversion and restful employment amid his poetic labors. He wrote at great length on the subject to Lady Beaumont, and laid before her an elaborate plan full of ivy, holly, juniper, yews, open sunshine glades, flower-borders, an alley, a bower, a spray-fountain, a quarry, a distant spire, a pool with two gold-fish, a vine-clad old cottage, and other things, which are artificial enough in the reading, but in reality seem remarkably well fitted to mingle the charm of cultivation with the wildness of the evergreens, and make a sheltering retreat where the life of nature would linger longest in autumn and revive earliest in the warm sun.

"Painters and poets," he wrote, "have had the credit of being reckoned the fathers of English gardening," and he felt thus in the line of succession in the art. It is most interesting to observe how he obtains suggestions from the poets, and makes their Pegasus plough his field. He was, of course, opposed to undue interference with nature and the deformity it occasions, and also to the ostentation of the wealth or station of the owner. "It is a substitution of little things for great when we would put a whole country into a noblemen's livery," he says with spirit, and, declaring that the laying out of grounds is a liberal art not unlike poetry and painting, he goes on to protest against the monopoly of nature by the great ones of the earth, upon high esthetic grounds. "No liberal art," he says, "aims merely at the gratification of an individual or a class; the painter or poet is

degraded in proportion as he does so. . . . If this be so when we are merely putting together words or colors, how much more ought the feeling to prevail when we are in the midst of the realities of things. . . . What, then, shall we say of many great mansions with their unqualified expulsion of human creatures from their neighborhood, happy or not — houses which do what is fabled of the upas tree — that they breathe out death and desolation?” These strictures on the aristocratic handling of land he continues for some pages in an interesting advocacy of esthetic communism — still a suggestive topic. This sense of the beauty and grandeur of nature as a universal boon, the desire to humanize the landscape without robbing it of its own essential character or of the minor charms of its native wildness, and a great delight in his own practical work of improving rubbish heaps, old walls, and broken ground into a winter retreat of sunshine and evergreens and red-berried vines, with nooks and views fit for a poet’s walk, are the qualities that still give interest to those half dozen letters about planting a waste acre of land. On the other hand, his genius, in which susceptibility to nature was so dominating a principle, seldom finds expression in the prose of his letters with nearly the same clearness and purity as in his poems. There is one extract, however, which must be given, of a city scene from the country poet: —

“I left Coleridge at seven o’clock on Sunday morning and walked towards the city in a very thoughtful and melancholy state of mind. I had passed through Temple Bar and by St. Dunstan’s, noticing nothing, and entirely occupied with my own thoughts, when, looking up, I saw before me the avenue of Fleet Street, silent, empty, and

pure white, with a sprinkling of new-fallen snow, not a cart or a carriage to obstruct the view, no noise, only a few soundless and dusky foot-passengers here and there. You remember the elegant line of the curve of Ludgate Hill in which the avenue would terminate, and beyond, and towering above it, was the huge and majestic form of St. Paul's solemnized by a thin veil of falling snow. I cannot say how much I was affected at this unthought-of sight in such a place, and what a blessing I felt there is in habits of exalted imagination. My sorrow was controlled, and my uneasiness of mind — not quieted and relieved altogether — seemed at once to receive the gift of an anchor of security."

This is not poetry, but it is from the same pen as the sonnet on Westminster Bridge.

Besides this taste for landscape, a special interest was taken by both friends in what poetry Wordsworth was composing from time to time. Wordsworth again expatiates on the "awful truth that there neither is, nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world," that is, in society; and again defines his aims, "to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and therefore become, more actively and securely virtuous," etc. Here, too, are the calm and patient confidence in his own immortality, a serene foreknowledge of how the matter would end, though there are some dark spots in his prevision, as when he says that "the people would love Peter Bell" if only the critics would let them. It appears, too, that these poets were discreet in their confidential criticism of each other, and by no means blind to faults. Wordsworth notices

that in Southey's verse, notwithstanding picturesqueness and romance and a minor touch or two, "there is nothing that shows the hand of the great master"; and Coleridge, with all his adoration for Wordsworth, even when declaring that he regarded the tale of the ruined cottage in the "Excursion" as "the finest poem in our language comparing it with any of the same or similar length," could yet put his finger on the very center of weakness in Wordsworth. "I have sometimes fancied," he says, "that, having by the conjoint operation of his own experiences, feelings and reasons *himself* convinced *himself* of truths which the generality of people have either taken for granted from their infancy, or at least adopted in early life, he has attached all their own depth and weight to doctrines and words which come almost as truisms or commonplace to others."

Wordsworth's last words are a farewell; they illustrate how the love of nature and enjoyment of it, unlike most of youthful emotions, gain an increasing glow with years, and they express his faith and life in the most elementary terms: "I never had a higher relish for the beauties of nature than during this spring, nor enjoyed myself more. What manifold reason, my dear George, have you and I had to be thankful to Providence! Theologians may puzzle their heads about dogmas as they will; the religion of gratitude cannot mislead us. Of that we are sure, and gratitude is the handmaid to hope, and hope the harbinger of faith. I look abroad upon nature, I think of the best part of our species, I lean upon my friends, and I meditate upon the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of St. John; and my creed rises up of itself with the ease of an exhalation, yet a fabric of adamant. God bless you, my ever dear friend."

THOMAS POOLE AND HIS FRIENDS

WHOEVER has read the memoirs of the Lake School must have a lively curiosity to know more of Poole. Coleridge drew his portrait in a fine passage of "Church and State," as a type of strong, practical character. De Quincey described him in "Autobiographical Sketches" — "a stout, plain-looking farmer leading a bachelor life in a rustic, old-fashioned house," with a good library, especially in political philosophy, having some experience of travel, and "so entirely dedicated to the service of his humble fellow-countrymen, the hewers of wood and drawers of water in this southern part of Somersetshire, that for many miles round he was the general arbiter of their disputes, the guide and counsellor of their difficulties." Wordsworth, in a letter to him asking his critical opinion of "Michael," says: "In writing it, I had your character often before my eyes, and sometimes thought I was delineating such a man as you yourself would have been under the same circumstances." Poole was, besides, the valued friend of Rickman, the statistician and compiler of the first British census; of Thomas Wedgwood, whose career, beginning with the experiments in photography which are well known, was so unfortunately ended by incurable disease; of Sir Humphrey Davy, and of others of the most useful men of the time. Both personally and in his relations with those men who felt the revivifying influence of the French

Revolution in England, he presents an interesting figure, and his memoir not only helps to complete our knowledge of Coleridge particularly, but exemplifies in a notable way the characteristics of his age of reform.

Poole is the more attractive because of the humbleness of the means by which he made his life remarkable. He was the son of a tanner in well-to-do circumstances, at Nether Stowey, in the region of the Quantock hills, and was bred to that business; but he had a thirst for knowledge which was perhaps encouraged in the home of his uncle, a more liberally-minded man than his father, where he found well-educated cousins, one of them going to Oxford. He could not have neglected his business very much, whatever his father may have thought, by his devotion to French and Latin, since he was chosen to be delegate to the Tanners' Trade Convention at London while still a youth, and made a favorable impression and brought away one valuable friendship. It may have been at this time and through the advice of the "great London tanner," Mr. Purkis, that he came under the influence of French opinions, which he imbibed sufficiently to alarm his Toryish cousins as well as the country neighborhood, by shaking the powder out of his hair. He was thought to be a democrat, and the word was at that time and place a thing to shudder at. How it was that he became acquainted with Coleridge, it is impossible to ascertain. There was a tradition that the two had met accidentally in a tavern, when the poet was in the army and Poole had metamorphosed himself into a common workman. It seems to be believed that Poole did carry out that plan of becoming thoroughly versed in the details of the tanning trade and acquainted with the minds and habits of the

workmen; but the time of this is uncertain. It is as a possible adventurer in the Pantisocratic scheme that we first find him connected with Coleridge. He describes the plan in a letter to an inquiring friend, and this account is the most detailed of any yet published about this famous project of settlement on the banks of the Susquehannah:

“Twelve gentlemen of good education and liberal principles are to embark with twelve ladies in April next. Previous to their leaving this country they are to have as much intercourse as possible, in order to ascertain each other’s dispositions, and firmly to settle every regulation for the government of their future conduct. Their opinion was that they should fix themselves at — I do not recollect the place, but somewhere in a delightful part of the new back settlements; that each man should labor two or three hours in a day, the produce of which labor would, they imagine, be more than sufficient to support the colony. As Adam Smith observes that there is not above one productive man in twenty, they argue that if each labored the twentieth part of the time, it would produce enough to satisfy their wants. The produce of their industry is to be laid up in common for the use of all; and a good library of books is to be collected, and their leisure hours to be spent in study, liberal discussions, and the education of their children. A system for the education of their children is laid down, for which, if this plan at all suits you, I must refer you to the authors of it. The regulations relating to the females strike them as the most difficult; whether the marriage contract shall be dissolved if agreeable to one or both parties, and many other circumstances, are not yet determined. The employments of the women are to be the care of infant children and other occupations suited to their strength, at the same time the greatest attention is to be paid to the cultivation of their minds. Every one is to enjoy his own religious and political opinions, provided they do not encroach on the rules previously made, which rules, it is unnecessary to add, must in some

measure be regulated by the laws of the State which includes the district in which they settle."

Such was the scheme of colonization worked out by Coleridge and Southey, the latter of whom Poole describes as "more violent in his principles than even Coleridge himself"; and he adds: "In Religion, shocking to say in a mere Boy as he is, I fear he wavers between Deism and Atheism." The cost to each undertaker was to be £125. But Poole, who was at this time twenty-nine years old, accompanied this information with very sound considerations as to the chimerical nature of the project, which is now interesting partly as an example of the French ferment, but mainly as a literary curiosity.

The lifelong friendship of Poole and Coleridge began some months later, in the summer of 1794. The actual day when Coleridge and Southey visited him was long remembered in the neighborhood as that on which the news of the death of Robespierre reached the place. Poole was already a suspected democrat, and had been warned that the Government had an eye on his private correspondence, but he made light of it. The violent expressions of his two companions on this occasion were scandalous. It is reported that, Tom's cousin (the tall, fair-complexioned Oxford don) being present, one of them had said that "Robespierre was a ministering angel of mercy, sent to slay thousands that he might save millions"; and Southey in particular laid his head down upon his arms and exclaimed, "I had rather have heard of the death of my own father!" But one must not rely on phrases handed down by tradition. It is certain that people were very much shocked, and in particular the fair-complexioned don, with powdered locks and

precise attire, who recorded the occurrence, but not the words, in his Latin diary. "*Uterque*," he writes, "*vero rabie Democratica quoad Politiam; et Infidelis quoad Religionem spectat, turpiter fervet. Ego maxime indignor*"; and after a few words more he concludes, "*sed de talibus satis*." The sisters of the Latinist, who was a most admirable man, were similarly indignant at "Cousin Tom" for entertaining such friends; and the situation was not improved when Coleridge, in the beginning of 1797, the friendship with Poole having now strengthened and become most intimate, came to live in Stowey, where he passed what must have been the most agreeable year of his life. It was here that he composed the "Ancient Mariner." To the young lady cousins the poet, "with the brow of an angel and the mouth of a beast," as he describes himself, was only a bugbear, and he received from them scant respect; but perhaps, as the biographer suggests, Mrs. Coleridge and the baby helped to reconcile him with the humbler neighbors. It was different when Wordsworth and his sister, with the young child for which they were caring, took the Alfoxden House near by, also with Poole's aid and counsel. Stories were rife about them at once: "the profound seclusion in which they lived, the incomprehensible nature of their occupations, their strange habit of frequenting out-of-the-way and untrodden spots, the very presence of an unexplained child that was no relation to either of them" — such are the reasons assigned for that cloud of distrust which gathered about the poet and his sister. It was now that the Government spy was sent to watch them, and they were warned to leave at the expiration of their year's lease, by the direction of the lady, Mrs. St. Albyn, who owned the estates. It was

to no purpose, apparently, that Poole wrote to her a full explanation of the circumstances, and assured her of Wordsworth's character. Matters reached their pitch, however, when Thelwall came to visit Coleridge, and, tired of a life of persecution, also wished to settle in this favored locality. This was clearly impossible, and Coleridge wrote to remind him that Poole could not be asked to jeopardize further his reputation in the country side.

The disturbed mind of the neighborhood, in view of the presence among them of a nest of democrats hatching they knew not what, was a passing matter. To Poole himself the companionship of Coleridge and Wordsworth meant an invigoration of his intellectual life which must have been a stimulus of no ordinary force. At the same time his practical sagacity was never once at fault. From the beginning the character of Coleridge declares itself as it is now well known, with all its excitability and impulsiveness, and that half-frantic weakness which marks so much of his correspondence. Some of these new letters would be incredible were it not that, unfortunately, there are too many others like them. Poole, however, discharged well his duty as the friend whom Coleridge always regarded as nearest and most faithful. He was constantly serviceable. It was he who devised the gift which was to be made annually from the proceeds of £25 contributions by Coleridge's friends. Doubtless he had much to do with obtaining the Wedgwood annuity of £150, which at the time seemed to insure a life undisturbed by financial anxieties; and in lesser matters he was not less active. On the other hand, Coleridge explains the nature of the bond which united them very plainly: "I used to feel myself more

at home," he says, "in his great windy parlor than in my own cottage. We were well suited to each other — my animal spirits corrected his inclination to melancholy; and there was something, both in his understanding and in his affections, so healthy and manly that my mind freshened in his company, and my ideas and habits of thinking acquired, day after day, more of substance and reality." As time went on, Poole, without lessening his admiration for his friend's abilities, saw more plainly the grave nature of his defects. He followed him with good wishes and high hopes on his German tour, but the winter in Malta and the months after Coleridge's return must have sealed his judgment that nothing of fulfilment of the expectations of Coleridge's genius was now to be looked for. He was never slow to give him advice, and it was always sagacious; but advice was the last thing that Coleridge wanted. Poole did not believe that Coleridge's ills were real. It is perfectly plain that in the years during which Coleridge suffered physically, and was making attempts to regain health by this and that project of travel, Poole regarded him as hypochondriacal, and told him so plainly enough, if not in so many words. This probably occasioned in part the disagreement, the coolness, in fact, which arose between them at one time, and which is the blot on their friendship. Coleridge resented the opinion that his ailment sprang from mental rather than physical causes; and, when an incident occurred to acerbate this feeling, he broke out in a manner which Poole rightly regarded as "outrageous." Wordsworth had written to Poole, detailing Coleridge's situation, and asking if he could not provide £100, for him to go to the Azores. Poole replied to Coleridge directly, and excused himself, saying

he was ready to contribute £20; and he concluded in the old strain: "Coleridge — God, I hope, will preserve you. It seems to me impossible to imagine that you would not be well if you could have a mind freely at ease. Make yourself that mind. Take from it — its two weak parts — its tendency to restlessness and its tendency to torpor, and it would make you great and happy. It would in a moment see what is right, and it would possess the power, and that steadily, to execute it." Poole was a man with many calls upon his purse, for his benevolence was marked, and at the time his affairs, as Coleridge knew, were in an unfavorable state; Coleridge, too, was then owing him £37. Yet Coleridge so far forgot himself as to remind Poole of the difference in their education, and to impute to him an illiberal spirit arising from his regard for money. "It is impossible that you should feel," he says, "as to pecuniary affairs, as Wordsworth or as I feel — or even as men greatly inferior to you in all other things that make man a noble being. But this I always knew and calculated upon, and have applied to you in my little difficulties when I could have procured the sums with far less pain to myself from persons less dear to me, only that I might not estrange you wholly from the outward and visible realities of my existence, my wants and sufferings"; and he ends with, "Let us for the future abstain from all pecuniary matters." He followed up this letter by others in the same strain, and refused to see anything "outrageous" in these remarks. The friendship survived the strain, much to Poole's credit; but the correspondence grew less constant, and finally ceased, except for a yearly bulletin from Mrs. Coleridge until her death. Poole continued, however, to be serviceable to the family, assisted Hartley through

college, and was always ready to fulfill his early promises of help. It is clear enough, it is pleasant to add, that Coleridge felt that Poole had really been his friend of friends, and that Poole on his side retained undiminished, however he might regret Coleridge's fate, his old affection for him.

We have left but scanty space for the record of Poole's own life, which might well be thought better worth detailing than the history of that friendship to which probably he owes his memoir. He was, as the biographer reminds us, a typical example of those Englishmen of his time who desired to make the most of themselves and live useful lives. He was, to begin with, fond of making and adopting improvements in his own business, which he conducted successfully until he retired from it, and at the same time he cultivated a large farm. In public affairs he had shown while still young a special interest in the condition of the working classes. The food riots, occasioned by the war, brought the subject very vividly to his attention, and he was directly engaged in the work of relief. We find him experimenting in ways of making cheap bread and in methods of planting wheat, and in later years deeply interested in the introduction of merino sheep into England. He built the village school, taught in it, and was eager to forward popular education. His cousin, John Poole, the young Oxford don, was the founder of the Enmore public school and a pioneer in the cause both by practical teaching and by means of his pen. Thomas Poole also founded the Female Friendly Society, for the purpose of assisting women in times of distress, and organized the savings bank. In brief, there was, it is said, no local charitable institution that he did not originate or support. This

interest in the condition of the people was the occasion of his friendship with Rickman, and consequently of his only public service. The two, after having met, corresponded on the subject of the Poor-Laws; and, an inquiry being shortly after authorized by Parliament, Rickman persuaded Poole to give some months of his time to the task of receiving and tabulating the returns. In this way, living in London, he was brought in useful contact with many public men.

His interest in politics, both foreign and domestic, never ceased to be keen, and although his early opinions, which do not seem to have been extreme, were modified with the course of years, he was at heart and in practise a reformer to the end. He was enlisted with Clarkson against the slave trade, and was one of those men who would use no sugar because it was raised by slave labor. Whenever one comes on the public questions of that day in these pages, Poole is found to be not only on the right side, but thoroughly in earnest and laborious in the work. It was natural that he should end his life as the leading and most respected man in his community, the adviser in all local affairs, and the friend and "common peacemaker," as he was called, of his neighborhood. His self-training intellectually, united with a capacity for fellowship, had made him the companion of many notable persons. He spoke French, and during his travels on the Continent in the year of the peace, he had the fortune to meet several of the distinguished men of the time; but such associations had not changed his original nature. He always affected a certain rusticity of manner; his voice was loud and disagreeable, made harsh by the constant use of snuff; there was a rough quality in him. When he was a county magis-

trate and coming to the end of life, he would proclaim, in what is styled an uncompromising tone, "For my part, I am a plebeian. I am a tanner, you know, I am a *tanner*." Southey speaks of him as "clod-hopping over my feelings"; but in a more amiable moment he also says, "Tom Poole is not content to be your friend; he must be your saviour." It is noticeable, however, that he had also that gift of tenderness which sometimes goes with rough natures. He was an excellent nurse, and was quick to come in all times of domestic trouble and bereavement, and no one was more welcome. In his drawer, after his death, was found among his mementoes a small packet labeled, "The hair of my poor shepherd, who served me faithfully for twenty-three years"; it is a trifling thing, but nothing could be more significant. He never married, and he outlived several of his best friends, especially Coleridge, Davy, and Tom Wedgwood; but his home was a center of cheerfulness, and he was surrounded in his later years by young people who had experienced his perpetual kindness. He left no great thing behind him to preserve his memory — he was a man of his generation only; but at the end of these volumes the reader finds himself of one mind with those of his friends of whom Coleridge in his character of Poole says, "Not a man among them but would vote for leaving him as he is." It is not often that an humble life, with so much of the substance of virtue in it, gets itself written.

THE DE QUINCEY FAMILY

DR. JAPP is the apologist of De Quincey. The particular attack is the doubt of De Quincey's veracity in the autobiographic details which he wove into his works. Some question of the Opium-Eater's truthfulness was early expressed, and Mr. George Saintsbury printed suspicions of the same sort which lost none of their vexatiousness coming from his pen. Mainly in consequence of this critic's remarks, if one may judge from the constant reference to them, Dr. Japp and the representatives of De Quincey published the family correspondence. The exposure of private affairs, nine-tenths of which have no interest whatever to outsiders, is complete. The interior arrangements, both domestic and financial, are laid open, and in the letters of De Quincey's mother, two sisters, and two brothers every one is made welcome to a not very edifying story.

The family was not a happy one. The mother was unable, apparently, to win the affection of the children, and they on their side were impatient of her discipline. Mrs. De Quincey was a woman of much formal propriety, attached to the Clapham sect in religious and moral sympathy. De Quincey himself draws a vivid picture of her as he remembers the impression she made on him in early years:

"Figure to yourself a woman of admirable manners, in fact as much as any person I have ever known distinguished by ladylike tranquility and repose, and even by self-posses-

sion, but also freezing in excess. Austere she was to a degree which fitted her for the lady-president of rebellious nunneries. Rigid in her exactions of duty from those around her, but also firm herself; upright, sternly conscientious, munificent in her charities, pure-minded in so absolute a degree that you would have been tempted to call her 'holy' — she yet could not win hearts by the graciousness of her manner. . . . It is as good as a comedy in my feeling when I call back the characteristic scene which went on every morning of the year. All of us, for some years six, were marched off or carried off to a morning parade in my mother's dressing-room. As the mailcoaches go down daily in London to the inspector of mails, so we rolled out of the nursery at a signal given, and were minutely reviewed in succession. Were the lamps of our equipage clean and bright? Were the springs properly braced? Were the linchpins secured? When this inspection, which was no mere formality, had traveled from the front rank to the rear, when we were pronounced to be in proper trim, or, in the language of the guard, 'all right behind,' we were dismissed, but with two ceremonies that to us were mysterious and allegorical — first, that our hair and faces were sprinkled with lavender water and milk of roses; secondly, that we received a kiss on the forehead."

It is not to a son's credit to write thus of his mother; but the tone shows plainly the absence of any warmth of feeling, a perfect coldness and apathy of filial affection. It is added that Mrs. De Quincey taught her children to undervalue themselves so that, says De Quincey, "we held it a point of filial duty to believe ourselves the very scum and refuse of the universe." And, to add the last anecdote that fills out this unfavorable picture, it is related that a servant, on being asked why she did not appeal to the mistress, replied: "Speak to mistress! would I speak to a ghost?"

Notwithstanding all this, it is plain enough that Mrs. De Quincey was a mother devoted to the welfare of her

children. She had the disadvantage of having guardians associated with her, one of whom, Dr. Hall, was certainly a most unfortunate choice. Mrs. Baird Smith, one of De Quincey's daughters, thinks that she was self-distrustful and sought advice from her friends, the Clapham people, and that the children felt this interference of strangers as a bar between them and their mother. Whatever was the reason, the result was that both Thomas and Richard ran away and suffered much hardship, and none of the others exhibit any attachment to the mother. On her side, however, we think none can read her letters without being impressed by her excellent qualities, and in particular, in later years, by her willingness to assist De Quincey and the rest to the utmost of her means. From the time he went to Oxford her purse was used for him, and after he had wasted his inheritance she gave him continually from her funds as much as was possible, though she insisted, with good sense, on keeping the capital intact and settling it on the grandchildren. She certainly lacked tact in appealing to the children, and she spoke her mind freely about their faults, but not so harshly but that a grown person, making allowance for her religious belief, strongly colored with evangelicalism as it was, should have seen and honored the motives and feelings which prompted such criticism. Here is as unfavorable a passage as can be quoted, written on hearing and too readily believing that the education of De Quincey's daughters was being neglected. She offers to pay the school bills, and then goes on as follows:

"I have long been too certain that you were bringing up your sons in idleness, but hoping they were to be made scholars and their minds taught to work, I supposed they

would be kept from falling necessarily into profligacy, and live by literature, but I know not where or what now to hope; and, O my son, if they are all brought up in idle ignorance, what but the worst can be expected? I am sure of this, that a Parent with your means who does this is utterly unworthy of children; but still in the present time where must the wages of this bad work fall the heaviest? In this time, bad as it is in many points, to bring up girls in idle ignorance is only to make them victims, not prepared to take their place among industrious people laboring for bread, yet too ignorant to be received elsewhere! I cannot express my feelings as I ought; I can only proffer my help; and if you can possibly be angry to hear the truth, I too well remember what you said touching my respect for the lowly virtues to be surprised, though not shaken in my well-assured convictions."

This is an extreme instance of fault-finding, and there is nothing in it that any one can object to, except the readiness to believe that De Quincey was so derelict in his parental duty; and it is allowed that as respects the girls there was some color for the censure. Perhaps another passage is not amiss as representing his mother's tone in his boyhood. She writes to him at the Manchester Grammar School as follows:

"I plainly perceive that you have exalted one, and that the most dangerous faculty of the mind, the imagination, over all the rest; but it will desolate your life and hopes, if it be not restrained and brought under religious government; it may then be turned to the use it was assuredly given for, in the pursuit of any profession, and be nobly used in the service of your Maker. In a worldly sense, without you bring this busy, restless power into submission to reason and judgment, you are undone; you are now carried away, wholly blinded by the bewildering light of your fancy, and that you may never see clearer your reading is all of a sort to weaken your mental optics."

These passages serve for illustration of Mrs. De Quincey's character and temperament, but they really do injustice to her since they do not disclose the continual anxiety she felt for her children, and her serviceableness to them practically after they grew up. She repelled them by her principles, too narrowly held and too rigidly enforced; she did not win their trust, and appeal to her against what they thought wrong in their school-life appears not merely to have been useless, but to have brought only her strongly expressed displeasure on them as unruly and disobedient. And these errors of conduct cost her their affection. It was a full price to pay, and justice may now be done to her more admirable traits of fidelity, self-sacrifice, and devotion to her parental duty.

Richard was the child who suffered most from the defects in his guardianship. He ran away from school because he was flogged, and, on being returned and flogged for this offense, he ran away a second time, joined a merchant ship as cabin boy, was captured by pirates on the South American coast, escaped and made one of the storming party at Montevideo, and so distinguished himself that he was at once rated a midshipman by the English admiral. He was in the action at Copenhagen, taken prisoner by the Danes, and afterwards exchanged, on which occasion he made himself known to his family. They questioned his identity at first, as he refused to meet them personally, but he afterwards satisfied their doubts, and was in pleasant intercourse with them till he met an early and unknown death in Jamaica on a hunting excursion. He was twice in England during his wanderings and was in want, but he so feared his guardians that he kept himself obscure;

nor did he finally disclose himself till he was safely past twenty-one years of age. This persistence of Richard in what must have been a hard and unwelcome life is the strongest proof of the severity and lack of sympathy he felt in his natural friends, and, indeed, his feelings towards his guardians must have amounted to hatred. In his letters he shows a pleasant disposition and the intellectual tastes which characterized the family, and he is altogether the most attractive of them. The letters of the sisters are not of any special interest except as they carry on the family story; and Henry, the last brother, seems to have been rather a weakling.

The literary part of the Memorials is considerable in bulk and separable from the family portion. Its principle feature is the collection of letters from Dorothy Wordsworth to De Quincey. These are admirable, and sufficient in charm and interest to give the volumes permanent value in literature. They describe, in the rapid, natural, and feminine way that belonged to their author's pen, the interior of the Wordsworth household; and as De Quincey was especially interested in the children, they are full of anecdotes and news about the little ones, who were as fond of De Quincey as he of them. Nothing, perhaps, is more childishly delightful than "Johnny's" interpolation into his evening prayer for his "good friends" — "Mr. De Quincey is one of my friends"; but there are several incidents of the sort. There is, of course, much besides the children's affairs — about the De Quincey cottage, then in the furnishing, the Green family lost in the snow, the doings of Coleridge, Wordsworth's verse-writing, Jeffrey's reviews, and especially the Convention of Cintra pamphlet which De Quincey was seeing through the press. Wordsworth

was somewhat apprehensive of being prosecuted for this publication, and Dorothy writes:

“William still continues to haunt himself with fancies about Newgate and Dorchester or some other gaol, but as his mind clings to the gloomy, Newgate is his favorite theme. We, however, have no fears; for even if the words be actionable (which I cannot but think they are not), in these times they would not dare inflict such a punishment.”

We should mention also two admirable letters of Wordsworth to De Quincey before meeting him, very characteristic and kind, and a letter of Coleridge to De Quincey when the latter asked repayment of some loans, in which Coleridge appears to advantage in the sincere expression of feelings honorable to him. The correspondence with Professor Wilson sheds light upon the financial relations of De Quincey with himself, both being borrowers, and exhibits the former's indulgence and friendship under trying circumstances. The correspondence of Lord Altamont abundantly justifies all that De Quincey said of his association with the family, and shows the peer's own character in a pleasant light.

The net result of this collection is to sustain De Quincey's accuracy of statement, and so far to benefit his reputation. At all points where he is tested by these documents he is found correct. At the same time, the history of the family is so exhibited as to give better opportunities for judging of his position in early life, and of how they discharged their obligations to him after he fell into misfortune. It is perhaps well to have the subject cleared up. It does not appear to us that, all things considered, he was illiberally treated. He took his career into his own hands with more or less excuse, but he did not prosper in the undertaking. As

soon as he came into his inheritance, he used it, in part generously, but altogether foolishly, and soon it was gone. He wrote a long and minute history of this worldly failure, and in it he discusses his hopes and the reasons of his various decisions. One passage illustrates his estimate of himself:

"I hoped, and have every year hoped with better grounds, that (if I should be blessed with life sufficient) I should accomplish a great revolution in the intellectual condition of the world. That I should, both as one cause and one effect of that revolution, place education upon a new footing throughout all civilized nations, was but one part of this revolution; it was also but a part (though it may seem singly more than enough for a whole) to be the first founder of true philosophy; and it was no more than a part that I hoped to be the re-establisher in England (with great accessions) of mathematics."

This was apparently written in 1818, in De Quincey's thirty-third year. That he formed such hopes, and retained them so long, shows the lack of judgment with respect to himself and his own life which characterized him. He had already fallen under the opium habit. He excused himself from ordinary labor in the professions on the ground of these great aims, and the fact was that most of what he really accomplished was piecemeal work done for the magazines to get money. His mother had about £13,000, which she determined to hand down to her grandchildren, *i. e.*, De Quincey's children, but she assisted him out of the income; and in this her decision must commend itself to a practical mind. His uncle in India also assisted him at times, but, after his retirement on a reduced allowance of perhaps £700 a year, seems to have found that sum no more than sufficient for

his bachelor tastes. It cannot be made out that De Quincey did not receive as much from the family estate as was fairly to be given to him. The reproach that they were indifferent to his welfare and practically deserted him has no foundation in the light of these Memorials. Altogether, the story seems more honorable to his mother than to himself, in substance, though she cannot be wholly freed from responsibility for errors of judgment, and for the cold demeanor in early days which made the youth of the boys so unhappy both in itself and in its results.

EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON

SENTIMENTALITY, under some one of its many forms, is ever ready to fasten on literatures that have become polished, and on social coteries in whose culture the intellectual mode has any part; for there is a fashion in gentlemen's thoughts as in their cravats and waistcoats — a ruling theory, a proper temper of mind, an established canon of criticism, assented to like a code of manners as a basis whereon the half-savage but gregarious animal, man, may safely converse. And just as there is one clique that dresses the body stylishly for the parlor, there is another that clothes the mind conventionally for the dinner table. In London, during the years just before the Reform Bill, this species of the higher etiquette was languishingly romantic, as later it was languishingly picturesque; it was then like a mystery of the illuminated, the peculiar faith, the *bon ton*, of society. Byron was its high priest, Bulwer its neophyte, and, to carry out the figure, the young Disraeli its fanatic. Then the gilded youth had each outlived a passion, a crime, and an ambition, and as ocular proof thereof wore the cast garments of Lara, the shoon and scallop-shell of Harold; the maids, old and young, sighed for blighted affections in preference to happy love, and after dinner became lachrymose over the songs of Moore in the drawing-room. Now that Gladstone governs where Melbourne lolled, it seems a worm-eaten, theatrical mask, whose best use in history was to be the

butt of Thackeray's banter. "What sort of a novel would Lady Caroline Lamb perpetrate to-day?" one involuntarily asks himself, as he reads of her sickly flirtations with the young-mannish Bulwer who was proud one day to wear Byron's ring, the public gyve of her lovers and chief sign of her favor, and sullen the next at finding the romance vapor away in a fiasco. In such hothouse society the precocious novelist grew up and tired, and early arrived at the cynicism that tempered his worldly wit, as well as at the knowledge of surfaces that gave *vraisemblance* and success to "Pelham." All this — the artificiality, insincerity, affectation, not of manners, but of feeling, in a word the sentimentality of the fashionable coteries affected by literature — must be kept in mind in order to understand Bulwer's temptations, his brilliant entrance on his long career, and especially the sterling qualities of his mind and heart.

His autobiography, with its supplementary letters, notes, fragments of novels, begins, as is common since the discovery of the principle of heredity, at the root of the genealogical tree. The author had much of the pride of race, and he has gathered some entertainment out of his trunkful of old papers; but usually the family records are of more interest to himself than to his readers, though all the latter, by a curious lapse of his son's pen, are styled "his posterity." His material grandfather, the omnivorous, silent scholar, who in Dr. Parr's opinion was the first Latinist of the times, and second only to Porson in Greek and to Sir William Jones in Oriental tongues, was really worth description; for there were strong traits and fine humorous contrasts in the old bookworm, who, indeed, once attempted originality by beginning a drama in Hebrew, but abandoned the

muse in disgust because he could not find Jews sufficiently versed in their own language to act in it, and at last, wearied with buried lore, "took the daughter of the vine to spouse" in the shape of an immense collection of the Spanish romances of chivalry. In the case of other ancestors, and especially in his mother's love affairs, Bulwer's own narrative is garrulous and in bad taste. Of himself he says but little, although he has written a good-sized book by the time he reaches his twenty-third year, when the autobiography stops.

One noticeable thing in this early period is that he was brought up by women. His father's death, when he was still a young child, left him a mother's boy, and her influence was the greater over him because he was removed from the company of his two brothers, and was never sent to a public school. He felt toward her a deep and grateful affection; but some part of his displeasing peculiarities were probably due to this early seclusion from the intimate observation of men and the unrestrained criticism of the Etonians. He was a precocious child, but his mother was not a Cornelia. Obedience to parents was, in her creed, the first commandment — upon it, as on a rock, two lovers and the happiness of her life had gone to pieces; the second was like unto it — regard for the world, respectability. Of her mental caliber here is an illustration, and perhaps it is also a straw to show from what quarter the wind blew in the matter of Bulwer's foppishness: "The powdered locks; the double-breasted white waistcoat, with the muslin cravat in great bows, rising over a delicate pink silk kerchief, carelessly folded to answer the purpose of our modern undervest; the top-boots, shrunk half-way down the calf; and the broad-brimmed hat, set with

easy impertinence on one side the head — ‘that,’ said my poor mother, after finishing her description, ‘that is what I call being well dressed!’” When Bulwer was advanced so far in childhood as to ask this guardian mother, “Pray, mamma, are you not sometimes overcome by the sense of your own identity?” she answered, “It is high time you should go to school, Teddy”; and, consequently, being nine years old, he went to Fulham, and was so shocked and so homesick that he was withdrawn in a fortnight, and after that was sent to other schools, which he left successively, as being too clever, too impetuous, or what not, until at one of these hostels of learning he had his first, and it seems his last, love affair. The story is very dimly told: a youth of seventeen, a girl slightly older, walks in the green sequestered meadows by the Brent, a passionate parting, and then three years of repulsive marriage for the girl, with death at the end, and for the boy a touch of imaginative melancholy, growing deeper and tenderer as the man found he had missed wedded happiness — this is all; but from the frequency and the feeling with which Bulwer introduced the story alike into his earliest and latest novels, it was clearly one of the marked and lasting experiences of his life.

From school to Cambridge was only a matter of routine; and from Cambridge, where he had made a mark as a debater and poet beside Praed (who was then to the university what Byron was to the world), he naturally went to Paris and authorship, with an adventure in gypsy life, a flirtation with Lady Caroline, and much perfumed correspondence, half gallant, half literary, for incidents by the way. He had already published very early some volumes of imitative verse, and

thereby had occasioned a flattering exchange of letters with Dr. Parr, in one of which that learned man indites thus wondrously to the versifier of eighteen: "Although in our politics we differ widely, yet I feel a pure, and I had almost said a holy, satisfaction in contemplating the moral properties of your mind." One queries whether or not the good old man felt the same "holy satisfaction" when he read "Falkland," the first result of these "moral properties" in literature. Pelham followed, and laid the foundation of Bulwer's fame. He married, published three more novels, became editor of the "New Monthly," and returned to the Reform Parliament. At this point, in May 1831, when he was twenty-eight years old, the present installment of the work closes.

Before the reader has advanced far, he perceives that the Earl of Lytton has invented a new scheme for writing biography, and, if it can be kept up to a certain level of accomplishment, a highly entertaining one. In his lifetime Bulwer was thought to be his own hero, and with this assumption his son so far agrees as to assert that he used his own experiences very patently in his fictions; but Bulwer probably did not foresee the ease with which the process could be reversed, and his novels turned into a biography by a copious use of his fragmentary manuscripts. This seems to be the purpose of his son. Bulwer is set before the world in the midst of the society in which he lived, the manners and characters of it being painted by his own hand, while his own part of hero — Lionel Hastings, De Lindsay, Glenallan, Greville — when not sufficiently defined by itself, is elucidated by letters or other ordinary biographical material. In this way the work gains merely as a story through Bulwer's really fine literary faculty; and he him-

self gains as a man through the judicious and timely disclosures and comments of his son. He remains the witty and brilliant man of the world, as he expressed himself in his characters, and he becomes in addition a more estimable man than he has been hitherto regarded. His conduct toward his mother, who violently opposed his marriage, and entirely broke with him on account of it, thereby depriving him of her pecuniary resources, on which he was practically dependent, was highly honorable. He engaged himself because he thought his future wife's affections too deeply interested to be rejected, and he married with a full knowledge of the distressing circumstances of alienation from his mother and of limited means in his household which would supervene; after he had thus done what he thought was his duty — for his passions were apparently not strongly aroused — he left no manly means untried to obtain reconciliation; and when that was at last arranged, he refused for a long time the money which his mother would have allowed him, because he felt that such an obligation was subject to misconception. Throughout the affair the consideration of loss or gain of property seems not to have weighed in his mind. He gains, too, by the mere revelation of the industry with which, as his biographer puts it, he fed the waters of oblivion through many obscure channels. Incessant labor, downright hard work, was involved in composing the hundreds of anonymous articles, by means of which he made enough money to pay his way, while still much under thirty, and living at such a high rate that the income of the four thousand pounds he owned was but a slight help. He had always been diligent; his boyish note-books show an active and wide curiosity about institutions, politics, and history,

as well as society. Something of his grandfather's polyglot spirit had descended on him, for what his son says is quite true: "Certainly no other novelist of my father's own age and country has bestowed upon the enrichment and elevation of his art anything like the same opulence of literary knowledge." The novels themselves are not better than those of his contemporaries on this account, but the man himself is more highly accredited. One is glad that Thackeray withdrew with frank apology his satire in "Fraser's," as being written under an erroneous idea of the author's character.

Unfortunately, Bulwer's defects were those most easily perceived and most exposed to the ridicule of sensible men; and, besides, his youthful judgment was always good. He himself, in later days, suppressed "Falkland" as liable to have an immoral tendency, while still disavowing any immoral motive in its composition. "Paul Clifford," it seems, was meant to help on reform in the penal code and in prison discipline. "Pelham" was mainly satirical, and intended to work against the Byronic ideal. Such assertions will surprise some readers, for certainly it is not any ethical purpose that gives life to his novels; but (to confine our remarks to "Pelham") the precocious knowledge of the world, the wit, the cynicism of the first disillusionment — this is the secret of their attraction. It is, perhaps, more pleasing to learn of the moral aim of an author when it would not be easily discovered except by himself. Bulwer plainly considered that he did something of consequence in rendering antiquated the sentimental fashion then prevalent, of which we have said he was the neophyte. As sometimes happens, the neophyte apostatized. He could not, however, quite free himself from the taint of the school in which he was

bred, as easily recognizable in these fresh, youthful manuscripts as in the novels of his first period. One of these fragments, "De Lindsay," was printed years ago, in 1832, in "The Ambitious Student," a fact of which the Earl of Lytton seems ignorant; at least, he publishes it as if for the first time. In themselves these literary remains add nothing, of course, to Bulwer's accomplishment; the libraries will have more of the same old piece, that is all. Nor, however much more highly Bulwer's character is rated for sense, manliness, intellectual vigor, and moral purpose, can it be granted that his early novels are substantially excellent. Even by their satire, by their very repulsion from the people they criticise, they are still essentially bound up with that society, and share in the affectations, hollowness, morbid and forced feeling, that characterized the literary age which Thackeray, Dickens, and George Eliot have made so remote from the present. Bulwer was in some respects of a finer strain than his companions, but he could not escape from among them.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF SIR HENRY TAYLOR

THERE are few literary pleasures greater than to read the familiar correspondence of men of intellectual cultivation; and when, as in the case of Sir Henry Taylor, it extends over a long life, and has outlooks upon several eminent groups in both politics and literature, one may expect this pleasure in an unusual degree. Taylor was a hard-working man in the colonial office all his life; he wrote, beside other poetical works, a drama, "Philip van Artevelde," which is thought to be one of the best plays of the century, and has had a continuous sale for fifty years; and his social position allowed him to see much of distinguished persons. The best of his life has been already made public in his "Autobiography," to which the present volume is a pendant, but by no means a superfluous one. It is concerned more with others than with himself. He entered life with the young men of whom Mill and Spedding were the most intellectual, and his friendship with the latter was lifelong. His own temperament shared rather the seriousness and sound judgment of such companions than the traditional enthusiasm and spirituality of the poetic character. In youth he suffered from those irrational depressions which vex men of nervous organization, and of these we get some impressions by way of reminiscence when he visited the country where he passed those days. He speaks, late in life, of having lost the sense of nervous enjoyment

which he felt in the beginning of his poetic career. Were it not for such touches as these, here and there in the pages, we should hardly see the poet in him at all. On the other hand, his mind was constitutionally practical, even skeptical, slow to accept and slower to be fired; he says, in one of his earlier letters, that he never had a devotional feeling, and he betrays no sign of one in his later utterances. It was a singular mind, sympathetic with the political economists and the business of administration in which he was engaged, and, at the other extreme, delighting in Wordsworth. The two elements, the intellectual and the literary, were admirably blended, and the result was an elevated if not a great life, and one of remarkable harmony within itself. In one place, he comments on finding himself more an observer of nature, perhaps from being less occupied with thoughts, that he used "to love poetry for its own sake, but nature for the sake of poetry"; and this shows that his start was rather in a literary impulse than in an inspiration. Then, too, the daily work at the desk must have had its effect, and he notes that his strength was thus regularly too much diverted to allow of writing poetry, which he calls one of the most exciting and exhausting of pleasures. He could not always command that leisure, sense of solitude, hope, and high opinion of his powers which he enumerates as the necessities of poetic production. More than all, he came late to the practice of the art; he wrote slowly and with much labor of thought; and though his work has taken a very respectable rank, one gets the impression that the poetic spark in him smouldered rather than burned. But it was not necessary that he should be a great poet, and, his nature was too capacious to let him be a poet of the

second rank; he was rather a remarkable type of the intellectual man, with the soundest moral qualities in the exercise of his mind, and it is for this that he is interesting.

The first group with which he was brought in contact was that of Wordsworth and Southey and some of their friends. He occasionally met both of these men, and through Miss Fenwick, with whom he was intimate, he had nearer views. He presents Wordsworth, on his visits to London, on his most amiable side, and really makes him attractive; but Miss Fenwick's letters are the more interesting. She bears testimony to Wordsworth's emotional nature, which may have some bearing on his excuse that he did not write love-poems because they would have been too passionate. "What strange workings are there in his great mind, and how fearfully strong are all his feelings and affections! If his intellect had been less powerful, they must have destroyed him long ago; but even in the midst of his strongest emotions his attention may be attracted to some intellectual speculation, or his imagination excited by some of those external objects which have such influence over him; and his feelings subside like the feelings of a child, and he will go out and compose some beautiful sonnet." There are traits enough mentioned that are well known — his self-confidence, heaviness, delight in household praise, an old man's vanity; but as Miss Fenwick never loses the attitude of admiration, there is nothing ill-natured in such confessions. Crabb Robinson was with the family, and she deprecates his criticism in advance. She has a bit of bright portraiture of him: "I really like him very well, and never cease wondering how he has managed to preserve so much kindness and courtesy in

his bachelor state. He and old Wishaw are the only exceptions I have met with to the tendency it has to deaden all love but self-love; but these two men seem both to love themselves and to make others love them. I remember making out to my own satisfaction that Wishaw preserved his benevolence through the want of his leg — a want that made him feel his dependence on his fellow-creatures, while it called forth their sympathy and kindness, and all those little attentions which cultivate affection both in the giver and receiver of them; and thus I imagined that the heart of old Wishaw was kept humble, grateful, and loving. But Crabb Robinson . . . I thought, the other day, when I was contemplating him while he was asleep (he always sleeps when he is not talking), that his *ugliness* had done that for him which the want of a leg had done for old Wishaw: it was great enough to excite compassion and kindness, which awakened his affections as well, perhaps, as a wife and children would have done, and made him the kind, serviceable creature he is."

Taylor's sketches of Wordsworth naturally have not the freshness that belongs to reminiscences of men who have been less frequently described, but they have the merit of directness. He reports him in London as "mixing with all manner of men and delighting in various women, for he says his passion has always been for the society of women"; and Lockhart is quoted as saying that when Wordsworth met Jeffrey for the first time there the poet "played the part of a man of the world to perfection, much better than the smaller man, and did not appear to be conscious of anything having taken place between them before." Taylor himself describes the old poet as "one of the most extraordinary human phe-

nomena that one could have in the house. He has the simplicity and helplessness of a child in regard to the little transactions of life; and whilst he is being directed and dealt with in regard to these, he keeps tumbling out the highest and deepest thoughts that the mind of man can reach, in a stream of discourse, which is so oddly broken by the little hitches and interruptions of common life that we admire and laugh at him by turns. Everything that comes into his mind comes out — weakness or strength, affection or vanities.” But this is the Wordsworth that the biographies all know.

Of other men of the time there are here and there a few glimpses, sometimes given with satirical humor. This is how Sadler looked at a dinner with Southey: “He talked slowly, clumsily, and continually; and when he stumbled in his talk and broke down, he got slowly up again and tried to do better, without appearing to be sensible that anything awkward had happened to him, or that everybody had hoped and expected that the breakdown would finish him. After tea, however, he got warmer and more flexible in his discourse, and at the same time not so hopelessly continuous, and seemed as if at times he might be agreeable, and at other times silent.” There is, too, a biting characterization of “my Lord Jeffrey,” in whose case, of course, Taylor was not without disturbing remembrance of what the critic had been to Wordsworth; but he thought him worth seeing, “in order to understand by what small springs mankind may be moved from time to time. There came from him, with a sort of dribbling fluency, the very mince-meat of small talk, with just such a seasoning of cleverness as might serve to give it an air of pretension.” He compares Wilson — “a jolly, fair-haired ruffian, full of fire

and talent, big and burly, and at the same time wild and animated" — to O'Connell, and remarks that he had "never seen two men, each striking in himself, whose appearance bore so much the same moral stamp." Of Southey nothing remarkable is recorded; but the relations between him and Taylor were full of respect upon both sides, and there are some letters of advice from the younger to the older man, in which there is admirable sense for all literary men who criticise public affairs. His distinction between the different degrees of responsibility generated by the duty of writing and that of acting upon subjects of public concern is most important, and his criticism on Southey's style, that "contempt, if it is to be believed to be genuine, must be, not expressed, but betrayed," is a convenient epigram for a polemical writer to keep always about him. But of all this earlier circle the most attractive figure is certainly that of Miss Fenwick, whose virtues were of that kind which too seldom sees the light. Her character, however, is felt rather than observed; there is no portrait of her in these letters, but very much is suggested, and one sees her chiefly by the reflection of her personality from the esteem and affection of Taylor and Aubrey de Vere. The latter pays a tribute to her, at the time of her death, in a letter to Taylor, which is the most humane in the whole series. On an earlier page he had said that her moral nature was greater than Wordsworth's, and here he speaks of her with such affection and sensitiveness to the unhappiness of her life, and in so pure a religious spirit, as to bring home to the reader the memory of a high nature.

To come to Taylor's own contemporaries, none of them who contribute letters to this volume impresses one more

pleasantly than De Vere. He was a lifelong friend and a poet besides, and he expressed himself frankly, and often with fullness, in his correspondence. He was the only one, Taylor confides to him, who thought as highly of the latter's verses as he did himself, and there was a good deal of poetic talk between them upon each other's work. De Vere's mind is subtle, and yet one that looks at things in the mass and as a whole; not that he generalizes, but he is continuous, a seeker after unity and comprehensiveness at once. Taylor says of him that his life was a soliloquy; certainly his thoughts have the characteristics of a mind working in solitude and largely within itself. This gives distinction to his letters, and the extraordinary refinement of his nature adds a grace which is never absent, and often comes upon one in some unexpected word, some minor thought, of the beauty of which the writer is unconscious. It is something more, however, that we obtain here a few personal glimpses of him. In one place we find him "an efficient mob-orator." It was during the Irish disturbances of 1847. "The troops came to attack a mob of several thousands, and, finding that they were in Aubrey's hands, who had stopped them and was making a speech from the top of a wall, the officer in command very wisely took away the troops, and Aubrey brought them to reason, and persuaded them to give up their enterprise and disperse." At another time he had an adventure with some men who came to kill a steward whom he had refused to dismiss, and in this case, too, "his invariable self-possession" stood him in good stead; but his knowledge of the people and their knowledge of him seem to have been the cause of his success in dealing with them. In other passages we find him winning a good word from Carlyle, after the

battle between them (Carlyle being "furiously and extravagantly irreverent") was over; and in general, lightness of heart goes with his serious mind and kind manner. But such a man is best seen in his own words, though one will readily understand the feeling that there is a kind of privacy in this portion of the correspondence, an intimacy with a living man, which sometimes rebukes observation.

The friendship between the two poets imparts a more personal element than is elsewhere to be found in the volume, except where Taylor writes of his own youthful days,

"Under the shade of melancholy boughs,"

to his wife. We feel this closeness when De Vere speaks of his "vexation at Alice's getting ill as the carriage wound up the steep hill to Perugia, and the strange touch of grief I felt at observing for the first time what looked like a solid tress of gray in your hair, as you stood before me at church in Naples." For the spirit of this friendship we leave the reader to search in what will not prove the least valuable portion of this collection; but before leaving the subject let us quote a short passage from De Vere's own retrospect: "Although there is a melancholy about the past, still the best scenes it presents to our memory seem to me presented even more to one's hope. They are less records of what was than pledges of what may be, and therefore must be in that far future that alone makes either present or past intelligible. One knows, looking back on them, that somehow they were not all that they seem to have been; or rather that, though they were all, and more than all, yet they were not either felt aright or understood aright

at the moment." We must find space, too, for De Vere's account of Tennyson's conservatism: "'You are quite a conservative,' I said to him, one day. He replied, 'I believe in progress, and would *conserve the hopes of men.*'" This was in 1848, and Tennyson was also saying in very good British, "Let us not see a French soldier land on the English shores, or I will tear him limb from limb." The occasional violence of the Laureate's prose, however, is not a new thing in our anecdotes.

There is a good deal, in one way and another, about Carlyle, the best being Taylor's remark *à propos* of Frederick: "The defect of Carlyle's book is one that belongs to the author, and which I once ventured to mention to him — that he does not know the difference between right and wrong." Some years before, in 1845, he made a happy quotation with regard to Carlyle's style: "His light comes in flashes, and

'Before a man hath time to say "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up';"

and he comments on the general subject of Carlyle's teaching: "I suppose that it will generally be found that when a man quarrels with all the world for not giving an intelligible account of the ways of Providence, it is because he is much perplexed at them himself." Later, in 1848, he says: "Less instructive talk I never listened to from any man who had read and attempted to think. His opinions are the most groundless and senseless opinions that it is possible to utter. . . . I think it is the great desire to have opinions and the incapacity to form them which keeps his mind in a constant struggle,

and gives it over to every kind of extravagance. Taylor never formed a more favorable opinion. In 1868 he compares him to "a Puritan of the seventeenth century — that is, in his nature and character of mind (not, of course, in his creed, if he has one); a man who renounces argument and reasoning which every other intellectual man of the time thinks it necessary to stand upon, and trusts to visions and insights." Upon Carlyle, Aubrey de Vere, too, has a good sentence with regard to the democrats not being very angry with him: "The Revolutionary people readily forgive his phrases in praise of despotic rule, just as the Whigs forgave Moore for his Irish patriotism, when they found he was contented to hang his harp on the orange-trees in the conservatories at Holland Park. Carlyle's admirers feel that *his works* are at the Revolutionary side."

Sir James Stephens, who took the interest of an elderly man in Taylor, is very welcome whenever he appears in the correspondence; and so is James Spedding, though he was not a good letter-writer. Taylor characterizes the latter's mind very sharply, in one place. He is speaking of Spedding's possible influence in causing Tennyson's revolt from Gladstone. "There is in it [his mind], however, a leaning to the controversial, which involves, perhaps, some tincture of the spirit of contradiction. If left to himself, he will contradict himself, till he works himself into just thinking and comes to a correct conclusion. But if a man like Gladstone is positive and absolute and vehement, and all on one side, the spirit will lift up its head and hiss like a serpent that is trodden on." In connection with this, and in general with the place Gladstone occupies in the politics at the end of the volume, it is amusing to turn

back to the year 1839, and find Taylor writing of him, "Two wants, however, may lie across his political career — want of robust health and want of flexibility." Old Lord Ashburton is very keenly drawn, especially in regard to his power of seeing all sides of a question, so that he was said to be notorious for convincing everybody in the House of Commons but himself, for he "generally ended by voting in the teeth of his own speech." To this earlier period belongs, too, a parlor scene of the Duke of Wellington with Miss Jervis singing to him and entertaining him — just the sort of scene that one would find only in a letter. Among the brightest social sketches, however, is that of the scene at Lady Ashburton's table when Tennyson was a new-comer at the seat of honor beside her, and Taylor gave him warning: "Twenty years ago I was the last new man, and where am I now?" Whereupon the lady rose in defense of her constancy, and ended by saying that "of course one's affection for one's old friends *was* a different thing." Then Tennyson asking "'what time it took to make an old friend,' I replied that with her five years reduced it to the decencies of dry affection"; and on Lady Ashburton's again coming to the defense of the lasting character of her attachments, Taylor said that he did "not dispute that they *hardened* into permanence. But what I was speaking of was the case of Alfred Tennyson, and I could only say that this time last year I had seen Mr. Goldwin Smith sitting by her side at dinner, just as I had seen Alfred Tennyson yesterday; and that I expected to see Alfred Tennyson this time next year occupying the position which I was told Mr. Goldwin Smith had occupied when he was here last week. I had not seen it myself, but it had been described to me. He came to the Grange

last year, innocent and happy in the bloom of youth, with violet eyes; and what he was now I had not seen, but I had heard of it." Then Lady Ashburton explained that a stranger is often shy, and so on, and Tennyson broke in with, "Then it appears, by what you say yourself, that you do not show me any particular favors." She said, "Well, it is a different sort of feeling that one has for a new friend and an old one; but you, Mr. Venables, are now almost an old acquaintance, and you can say what you feel about it." "Then," the narrative goes on in Taylor's words, "as Venables was beginning to bear his testimony, to his infinite horror Alfred said, 'Why, you told me yourself that Lady Ashburton had been very kind to you at first, and that now' — Here Venables stopped him, speaking aside in a deprecating tone, and I ended the debate by saying, 'Well, Tennyson, all I can say is that my advice to you is to rise with your winnings and be off.' Venables said to Mrs. Brookfield, afterwards, that Alfred was truly an *enfant terrible*." This, as an example of conversation "at the Grange," is not without interest, for one does not often meet with verbatim reports of how the men and women talked at that famous meeting-place. It is pleasant to read in the next letter that "there was no pain given in these passages between Lady Harriet and me," but all was "light, gay, stingless talk."

Another portion of the correspondence deals with political affairs, and here one finds Lord Gray, whose love of justice is a most noticeable trait, and, besides Gladstone in person, talk about Disraeli, Governor Eyre, and the Jamaica incident, and such topics as reform of the penal code, Irish affairs, constitutional changes, Bulgaria, the colonial relations, and the like; but this portion of the

contents is incidental and comparatively small. It is interesting to observe that to a lifelong opposition to field-sports and a horror of vivisection Taylor added a belief in the efficacy of the lash upon criminals, and in general of sharp physical punishments, though he disapproved, apparently, of employing such correctives upon hardened offenders. The inconsistency, from the sentimental point of view, is solved by remembering that Taylor thought out these conclusions rationally, instead of arriving at them by sensitive feelings. His defense of the whipping-post goes to the point of advocacy. Of the persons who are to be met with, in this part of the letters, Lord Gray is by far the most impressive; and of the lesser men, the Elliots are most attractive. The figure of Sir John Grant is one not to be met with outside of the English hunting-grounds, and it is briefly drawn: "I found him in what the house-agents call a 'spacious mansion,' with glowing pictures on the walls, presenting divers interesting objects without clothes. And I found flesh in a variety of other exquisite forms upon the dinner-table, and he looked a tall, large, solid, substantial man, with a russet face expressing ease and comfort; and I asked him what could induce him to leave all this, and 'live laborious days' in Jamaica. His answer was: 'I cannot tell you, for I do not know. When I came from India, three years since, I found my leisure altogether delightful, and came to the conclusion that what I was made for was to swing upon a gate. I have seen no reason to think otherwise since, and why I am going to Jamaica I cannot understand!' I hear," concludes Taylor, "he was infinitely laborious as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and that he is one of the few men to whom idleness and labor are equally welcome." But

the life-likeness of Taylor's portraiture and anecdote is well enough known from his "Autobiography." In age his pen was more effective than in early manhood, and seems to have been more free in comment. His remark upon Macaulay's personal appearance, in connection with the latter's expressing some vanity on hearing that the handsomest woman in London had pronounced his profile to be a study for an artist, is an admirable example of the vigor of his short sentences in latter days. "His looks," writes Taylor, "always seemed to me the most impudent contradiction of himself that Nature had ever dared to throw in a man's face."

The correspondence as a whole is a subsidiary volume; but apart from the more important "Autobiography," it has a high value of its own as a collection of letters by men and women of cultivation, and one feels in them the presence of social tact and manners, as well as much strength of mind, occasional wit, and in one case, at least, remarkable grace in expression. They are a record of London life, notwithstanding the fact that the correspondents often lived in the country; for it was London that united them. It is quite in keeping with the tone of the book to find Taylor himself, in early manhood, so much a Londoner as to confess that "the Regent's Park is more beautiful in my eyes than Venice"; and he follows up the declaration by a description of his evening walk there before going to bed, which redeems his preference for "the most beautiful civic scenery in the world." The intellectual life of London is a bracing one, and here one gets somewhat nearer to it than books often bring the reader, and finds himself always in excellent company for the mind. Taylor's individ-

uality naturally gives unity and a dominant tone to the volume, and that is perhaps the reason why one is so constantly impressed with the solidity of mind and soundness of judgment which seem to belong to all these correspondents.

HAYWARD'S CORRESPONDENCE

MR. HAYWARD, alluding at the end of his life to his literary début as the translator of "Faust," humorously remarks: "Lady Blanche Hozier asked me, the other day, if I read German; and it is by no means the first time that the same question has been put to me." It is as the author of that excellent prose version of Goethe's great work, published more than half a century ago, that his name is best known, though he has a reputation of another sort as a critic, which rests upon the solid and copious volumes of his reviews. He was born in 1801, and, after school days, was articled to a solicitor, and in due course entered at the Inner Temple. He joined the famous London Debating Society which Mill and the philosophical Radicals had founded, where he supported the Tory side, and in 1828 he became editor of the *Law Magazine*, which was established to further the cause of law reform. Out of his interest in this subject grew some relations with the law professors at Göttingen, whom he visited in 1831, and this was the beginning of his extensive acquaintance on the Continent, which was afterwards of great influence on his career. The immediate literary result of this trip to Germany was the translation of "Faust," issued in 1833, which at once gave its author the position of a known man of letters. Mr. Hayward remained a working lawyer, however, and received in 1845 an appointment to the rank of Queen's Counsel; but this advancement, giving rise

to a professional quarrel in consequence of the Benchers refusing the customary election to their body, practically terminated his legal career. He had been received into society, and, as he was already in association with eminent party men, he fell naturally into politics, as one of the Peelites, and was a main support of the *Morning Chronicle* while it was in the interest of that coterie. His labors in journalism were signalized by his writing a leading article on an important debate, on the bill for the repeal of the Navigation Laws, in season for the morning's paper — a feat of which it is said: "It revolutionized at a stroke the whole art of leader-writing, and statesmen found all at once that, with a quiet man of letters sitting in a corner of the gallery with a bit of pencil, they had to lay their account for prompt and energetic criticism in the newspapers the next day, concurrently with the publication of their own speeches, instead of criticism the day after, when the speeches had done their work."

The close connection with public life which Mr. Hayward formed in the course of these years was maintained by him; and, though he was never in the House or in Government, his place in society, his long experience and his abilities, and a certain knowledge of men, sustained him in an unofficial position of influence. Thiers made him the channel of advice during the Crimean war; and in 1870, during the former's diplomatic tour to solicit the good offices of the Powers in behalf of France, his first visit in England was at the rooms of his old friend. Slidell, of Confederate fame, also used Mr. Hayward as a means of communication in his efforts to obtain recognition for his Government; and, in connection with this, one notes a call he made on Motley at Vienna in 1862,

whom he found "more unreasonable than ever, vowing that the restoration of the Union in its entirety was 'as sure as the sun in heaven.'" In the changes of the Ministries, especially in the days of coalition, Mr. Hayward was *en rapport* with the principals, and occasionally was useful in personal negotiations. It was on services of this nature, in the formation of Lord Aberdeen's Cabinet, that he grounded his application for a Charity Commissionership, which failed; and it is curious to note his observation on this incident: "When men work together for a party object, they are all entitled, in their several ways, to a share in the advantage of success." This is not the spoils doctrine, for which it might be mistaken, but that of party reward in filling new or vacant offices as against the aristocratic system of nepotism.

Mr. Hayward never obtained any of the material fruits of political service, though a second attempt was made for him in later years. He was successively in intimate relations with Lyndhurst, Newcastle, Palmerston, and Gladstone, and apparently grew liberal with his times. It is amusing to find him dismissing Disraeli in 1850 in a couple of lines as "very nearly if not quite forgotten"; and he adds, "How soon one of these puffed-up reputations goes down!" In 1880 he writes, "I have been longing for the fall of the Disraeli Government as I did for the fall of the Second Empire." He had taken his name off the Carlton Club in 1870, having apparently had the experience of much bad manners there, after it became more a strictly political club than it was in the first part of the century; and he was evidently a thorough-going Liberal when he died, as we read in one of his last letters, "During my long life I never remember a period when the English *people* were less Radical than now."

Ten years ago Gladstone was writing to him in respect to the obstructiveness of the Upper Ten Thousand in the political progress of the century, to the same effect as was the language he used upon the stump. Hayward's interest in politics continued unabated until his death.

In the whole course of his career he was a careful and fluent writer, being reckoned the best of the essayists of the old school; and since, in his later years, he had the great advantage of treating of men whom he had known all about in life, his work has a special interest and value. Literature consequently shares with politics the pages of this correspondence, which derives considerable luster from the many distinguished names among the signatures. At the date of the beginning of the series Mr. Hayward was thirty-three years old, and had already given some of those little dinners at his rooms in the Temple for which he was afterward noted. He gathered there intellectual men and brilliant women, and in particular he exercised hospitality toward foreigners; men so various as General von Radowitz, Louis Blanc, and the poet Dupont, being among his guests. He gives in one place a few instances of the ignorance of one another among the eminent writers of Europe that had come under his observation. Manzoni did not know Bulwer by name in 1834; Schlegel, arriving in England in 1832, had not heard of Macaulay; M. Charles Dupin did not know of Babbage's 'Manufactures' four months after publication; and Say, the economist, was unacquainted with Whately's name, though Mr. Hayward found in Say's library at the time a presentation copy of the 'Lectures' "from the Archbishop of Dublin." At Mr. Hayward's rooms such international indifference was as likely to be corrected as anywhere in London. He

made many short, journeys to the Continent, usually to Paris, and thus renewed and strengthened old ties and formed new ones; but his travels dealt with persons of distinction and affairs, and were fruitful only of information and social alliances. The mass of his correspondence, consequently, is wide in range of acquaintance, and friendly in tone; there is in it naturally a very large proportion of what is transitory and not a little that is trivial — society and political news, the record of dinners, the chances of Parliament, ministerial changes, etc. The whole is a very heterogeneous collection of notes and letters, light and serious, dull and entertaining, but it affords a fair retrospect of half a century of London life in the world of affairs and entertainment. Of the substance it is to be said that it has less solid value than one would have expected.

The literary portion is extraordinarily meager. The best of the letters are from the sprightly pen of Mrs. Norton; and the feminine correspondence in general is the most pleasant feature of the volumes. Very few of the letters, however, deal with literary reputations either in the way of anecdote or criticism. In reply to a request for material for an essay upon Rogers, Mrs. Norton writes very justly of him as a small man filling a miraculously large place in the world, and defines his individuality by saying that tastes were to him what passions are to other men: "He did nothing rash. I am sure Rogers as a baby never fell down, unless he was pushed; but walked from chair to chair of the drawing-room furniture steadily and quietly till he reached the place where the sunbeam fell on the carpet." He preferred a lullaby to the merriest game of romps, she thinks, and would have begged that his long clothes

might be made of fine mull muslin instead of cambric, which was capable of a thing "he loathed, starch," Lady Dufferin writes on the same subject: "I never could lash myself into a feeling of affection or admiration for him. . . . I have heard him say many graceful things, but few kind ones, and he never seemed to me thoroughly in earnest save in expressing contempt or dislike. . . . It seemed a positive pain to him to hear any modern poet praised, and I remember his treating me with a rudeness almost bearish because I indiscreetly avowed how much I admired Tennyson's 'Princess.'" She then tells the anecdote of being accidentally left in the dark with him, and his jest: "Ah, my dear, if sweet seventy-eight could come again! *Mais ces beaux jours sont passés.*" Besides these brief passages on Rogers there is really nothing of interest in regard to the world of letters, except an opinion of Bulwer's on Macaulay, in which he remarks that the historian's acquaintance with the world — that is, with men's actual characters — was slight, and then recites what are now the common-places of criticism on Macaulay (but this was in 1861) — that his style excludes many of the nobler excellences, being without modesty, or suggestiveness, and is, besides, indebted to coarse tricks of art in color and contrast, while the secret of his vogue is discovered in his relieving his readers from any necessity to think. Apropos of a wordy letter of Carlyle's Mr. Hayward himself writes: "I never yet followed him to the authorities without finding him wrong. In my 'Essay on Marshal Saxe' I have proved from signed documents that Carlyle's labored account of the battle of Fontenoy is essentially incorrect. He is a man of genius, undoubtedly, but he has injured instead of improving literature, and taste; and, as to

his conversation, if he spoke English and attended to the rules of good breeding, its charm for the mass of his admirers would disappear." In another place is an equally brief judgment on Balzac, whom he was rereading in his seventy-eighth year and found not to improve: "the fineness of observation and analysis of feeling are undeniable, but his descriptions, both of places and characters, are tediously spun out, his plots teem with improbability, and he has a vulgar fondness for wealth and rank."

These extracts practically comprise the entire literary interest of the two volumes; nor are there any anecdotes by the way to speak of, if we except the droll suggestion of Hook to Lord Lyndhurst, who had come to a dinner with gold-laced trousers, that "to appear with all his glories he should reverse his position in the chair." Lord Lyndhurst appears very agreeably in the earlier pages, but death soon removed him. To him is attributed the witticism apropos of Mme. Genlis's keeping her books in detached cases, the male authors in one and the female in the other, that the reason was "she did not wish to add to her library" — a joke unfairly claimed by James Smith. Of the correspondence with public men, that of Sir Henry Bulwer (Lord Dalling) is of most note. In his long and varied service he had experience of state affairs in many lands, and his remarks are pointed, shrewd, and sensible. Writing of the Ionian Island difficulty in 1863, he illustrates his width of view and soundness of principle: "The tendency to resign empire is a dangerous one for an empire to fall into; but if a people wish to get out of your hands, and public opinion is not for keeping them, a Minister in what is called, and is, a free country can have no policy

of his own in the matter." And, again, of the Eastern question, in the same year, he states the function of England very aptly as being "to prevent no government taking the place of some government, and urging and helping a bad government to be better than it was." As the negotiator of the Bulwer-Clayton Treaty, what he thought of our diplomacy has some interest, and he expressed his opinion very frankly on the question of the indirect claims being urged under the Washington Treaty: "When I had to make a treaty with them [the American statesmen] I took the trouble of going over all their own treaties, and only using in important passages such words as they had used, in the sense in which they had used them. Then when they began their usual disputes about interpretation, I quoted their own authority. All their own newspapers acknowledged I was right." Sir Henry's mode of meeting his cousins in diplomacy was one of commendable safety. He exhibits solidity and sense on all occasions where he is met in these letters, and yet there was a vein of daring in him hardly consonant with his caution. His characterization of Peel as a state-clock which was silent till it struck the hour, is admirable, as are also his observations on the inconveniences of such a political time-piece in a representative Government.

There are one or two interesting communications from Mr. A. G. Dunlop about Spain, in which he notices that Spanish art was a temporary importation from Italy, as Spanish wealth was from America, and both almost to be classed as matters of chance, not national development; and he contrasts the Spanish peasant with the Italian, South German, or Greek people, as without appreciation of art, not caring for flowers or trees even,

and staring at pictures only because they are "holy" and appeal to his superstition. He adds that the Spaniards are likewise without any desire for knowledge, and declares there is no *avenir* for the pure-blooded race: "If the Spaniard remain any longer as he is in spite of railways and increased intercourse, the commerce of the seaboard will more and more slip away into the hands of foreigners — French, German, Swede, English — and the pure race (native) will fall back on the interior and inland villages, hewers of wood and drawers of water." There are letters, too, from Lady Clanricarde (daughter of George Canning), with excellent passages on the condition of Ireland, worth reading now as evidence of the long-established, long well-known state of affairs there. "It appears to me," she says, "contrary to all I have seen or read that a great amount of discontent *continuing* in a country should not produce serious results of some sort." This concludes the list of really notable letters in the department of public affairs.

Of Mr. Hayward himself one forms a conception not very deeply marked. Mr. W. E. Forster says that the unique characteristic of his political thought and experience was "the result of a curious combination of a hard, worldly, even cynical sympathy with popular movements, and ideal aspirations." He had enemies and prejudices; but his strength of character seems to have included independence, sincerity, and perfect courage as elements, and he was undoubtedly liberalized by the variety of his associations with other minds. His career was laborious and honored, and one cannot but regret that he left no more extensive and notable memoirs, as he might well have done. This correspondence is but a meager substitute.

THACKERAY'S LETTERS

How much formal biography really adds to our knowledge of a great literary character is a curious question. Perhaps it is not modesty nor a proud and sensitive reserve that urges a nature like Hawthorne's to try to evade the biographer; nor does mere humbleness of spirit account wholly for Thackeray's repeated injunction upon his heirs not to allow the public to view his private life. Probably every man of literary genius who has found expression for what was in him feels that his true self is there in his works, and that in his personal life, with all its accidental and eccentric details, the circumstances of his position and the varying moods of his temperament obscure the reality, and are, more often than not, misleading. A quarrel that was but an incident of a lifetime becomes a long episode in the book; a scandal that quickly melted away comes back as a cloud not to be dispersed; an irritable letter, an imprudent witticism, a blunder in some fit of dullness, a piece of self-deception that was only momentary, and all the thousand and one superficial matters that fill the day are brought into prominence, as if they, and not the spirit that underwent these crosses, were the life itself. But the real man is in his books. One knows that this is so in Thackeray's case. The personality of the author is so blended with his characters, and makes so largely the main charm of his style, that one comes to know him with exceptional nearness, and to feel that

there is no other reason to desire a formal biography of him than to have more of the same thing.

In reading the letters which Thackeray wrote to his friends, the Brookfields, one is most struck by this identity of the man and the author; it affords a most startling test of Thackeray's sincerity. Those who are lovers of his works, thoroughly familiarized with his ways of looking upon the world and his manner of treating the individuals who compose it, experience no surprise at this; but they are delighted to hear the old voice speaking again, and pleased to have his qualities brought out in this private correspondence so plainly that no one, however blind to his real nature in his novels, can fail to find in the writer the kindliness, the honesty, and goodness of heart which lie at the bottom of all his great achievements in literature. He is to be seen here as genuinely as Steele in those letters to his wife, which are as charming a piece of biography as English literature has to show.

The collection covers eight years of Thackeray's mature life. It is composed of every-day notes, written from the club or his lodgings about the things of the hour; or of longer letters of travel, sent from some watering-place on the Continent, or some country retreat in England, or from Paris, whither he made frequent excursions. They are for the most part entirely personal, and describe what happened to himself, or confide the moods that visited him; and, too, they are especially the letters of a novelist — the world that he sees is the very same that he writes about. One may say that in the passages concerning persons we read his novels in the rough, his notes still unelaborated; and we see quite plainly the method in which he worked up his observa-

tions, and the way in which life reacted upon his mind. Such is the description of the friend of his youth, whom a score of years before he thought "the most fascinating, accomplished, witty, and delightful of men":

"I found an old man in a room smelling of brandy and water, at five o'clock, at ——, quite the same man that I remember, only grown coarser and stale somehow, like a piece of goods that has been hanging up in a shop window. He has had fifteen years of a vulgar wife, very much brandy and water, I should think, and a depressing profession; for what can be more depressing than a long course of hypocrisy to a man of no small sense of humor? It was a painful meeting. We tried to talk unreservedly, and as I looked at his face I remembered the fellow I was so fond of. . . . He must have been glad, too, when I went away, and I dare say is more scornful about me than I about him. I used to worship him for about six months, and now he points a moral and adorns a tale such as it is in 'Pendennis.' . . . Poor old Harry ——! and this battered, vulgar man was my idol of youth."

It is worth noting that Thackeray's satire is not merely that of a man acquainted with the world, not hard, and incisive, and sneering only, but that of a man who in his youth had "a knack of setting up idols to worship," and in whom acquaintance with the world was not only knowledge, but disappointment. Regret, the remembrance of better things, is one of the colors of his style; it is "the principle" of which he elsewhere speaks as based "on the eternal data of perennial reminiscences."

A particular interest attaches to the half dozen paragraphs, scattered through the volume, in which Thackeray expresses his convictions upon religious topics. It

is a very simple creed, and is usually brought to the surface by way of reaction against some irritating doctrine of a more stalwart church than that in which he is militant. A sentence or two may not be out of place: —

“The light upon all the saints in heaven is just as much, and no more, God’s work as the sun which shall shine to-morrow upon this infinitesimal speck of creation, and under which I shall read, please God, a letter from my kindest lady and friend. About my future state I don’t know; I leave it in the disposal of the awful Father — but for to-day I thank God that I can love you, and that you yonder, and others besides, are thinking of me with a tender regard. Hallelujah may be greater in degree than this, but not in kind, and countless ages of stars may be blazing infinitely, but you and I have a right to rejoice and believe in our little part, and to trust in to-day as in to-morrow. . . . When I am on a cloud a-singing or a-pot-boiling, I will do my best; and if you are ill, you can have consolation; if you have disappointments, you can invent fresh sources of hope and pleasure. . . . By Jove! I’ll admire, if I can, the wing of a cock-sparrow as much as the pinion of an archangel, and adore God, the Father of the earth, first; waiting for the completion of my senses, and the fulfilment of his intentions towards me afterwards when this scene closes over us. So, when Bullar turns up his eye to the ceiling, I’ll look straight at your dear kind face and thank God for knowing that, my dear; and though my nose is a broken pitcher, yet, lo and behold! there’s a well gushing over with kindness in my heart, where my dear lady may come and drink.”

All this, however, one can read in the novels as plainly,

if one will, and perceive in it the real piety toward heaven and brotherliness toward man which belong to a large, grateful, and honest heart, much perplexed and cast down before the gorgeous presence of the Church Established.

But why go on to detail what every one interested will read for himself? The little satirical vignettes, *ma cousine* at Paris, the cavalier lady in the row, the Continental *table d'hôte* where he dined like "an ordinary person," the French plays with their naughtinesses and their little girls singing for the dragoons, Jules Janin, the Chinaman kissing the Duke of Wellington, to that "old boy's" great surprise, the old gentleman in pantalets — all these one must look at for himself. The unfailing interest in human life, especially in the worldly stage, and in little else besides; the preoccupation with the novels in hand, and their reality to the author as part and parcel of the life he has lived; the just eye for the visible weaknesses of mortals, and the charitable-ness and self-abasement of him who recognized it all as of a piece with his own humble human nature; the constant and unwearied lovingness of the man whose Lares and Penates were tenderness and humor; his generous admiration — these belong to his personality, and are not to be understood except in their concrete expression; and the whole volume which contains these things must be read, if one would understand. It is in no sense a life of Thackeray; it is a better thing — it is Thackeray living.

DARWIN'S LIFE

THERE is nothing more useful to observe in the life of Darwin than its simplicity. He was the man of science as Marlborough was the soldier, and he was only that. From boyhood he refused all other ways of life and knowledge as by instinct, and in his maturity the ill health which ends the career of ordinary men only confirmed him in his own; he was always the collector, the investigator, or the theorizer. A second quality, which is general enough to be constantly attracting attention, is the thoroughly English character of his life. The stock from which he sprang was rich in old English qualities of vigor, sense, and originality; the house in which he was reared offers an excellent type of English family life, and was as good a place to be born in as could be desired for any son; his father's strong character, the influence of his older relatives, the ordinary schools he attended, the smallest incidents of his childhood, even the jokes of his playfellows, belong to the moral climate of the old country; and it does not need the grouse-shooting, the Cambridge undergraduate suppers, and the proposition that he should choose the Church for a profession to tell us where we are. Indeed, Darwin in his youth, spirited, cordial, and overflowing with health, in his early surroundings of English strength and kindness, was quite as attractive as in his quieter, and in some respects narrower, working life.

He certainly won upon the men whom he met at the

outset of his career. "Looking back," he says, "I infer that there must have been something in me a little superior to the common run of youths: otherwise the above-mentioned men, so much older than me and higher in academical position, would never have allowed me to associate with them. Certainly I was not aware of any such superiority; and I remember one of my sporting friends, Turner, who saw me at work with my beetles, saying that I should some day be a Fellow of the Royal Society, and the notion seemed to me preposterous." Of these men Henslow was the most attached to him and interested in his success. He had not done much more than work at "his beetles," but his scientific taste was already the ruling genius of his life. It is surprising to see how completely he remained untouched by the ordinary influences of a university training; he thought in later years that his scholastic education had been a waste of time, and he seems justified when one perceives how little good he got from it. His was a mind that belonged to himself, self-fed, almost self-made; he lived his own life, and not another's, from the start; though his taste for collecting was hereditary, the persistence with which he gave himself up to following it, the completeness of his surrender to his one predominant talent, was his own. He was, nevertheless, better furnished with intellectual power than he appears to have believed. "From my earliest youth," he writes, "I have had the strongest desire to understand or explain whatever I observed, that is, to group all facts under some general laws." It is true that he started from some specific facts, had a definite, tangible problem to solve; but he felt the necessity to solve it. He differed from the collector in this, that his curiosity was not exhausted in gathering materials,

but he must also order his materials; or to put it exactly, must organize his knowledge. This shows the great vitality of his reasoning faculty, which within its special range was really precocious. The native strength of his mind in this direction is also illustrated by the great pleasure he derived from reading Paley's "Evidences." "The logic of this book," he declares, "and, as I may add, of his 'Natural Theology,' gave me as much delight as did Euclid. The careful study of these works, without attempting to learn any part by rote, was the only part of the academical course which, as I then felt and as I still believe, was of the least use to me in the education of my mind. I did not at that time trouble myself about Paley's premises; and taking these in trust, I was charmed and convinced by the long line of argumentation." He acknowledges his inability in later life to follow trains of abstract reasoning, such as make the matter of metaphysics; but he was quite aware of his aptitude for inductive reasoning, and does not overestimate its influence in the composition of his great work. "Some of my critics have said, 'Oh, he is a good observer, but he has no power of reasoning!' I do not think that this can be true, for the 'Origin of Species' is one long argument from the beginning to the end, and it has convinced not a few able men." His taste for collecting was a *sine qua non*, but it was this power of reasoning, however limited in range, that made him great; and it is as clearly to be seen in operation in his formative years as was the passion for collecting which was to feed it with material to work upon. His vivacity and energy no doubt counted much in winning for him the friendship of elder men, and he possessed that indefinable but potent quality of personal attractiveness: but Henslow

in the beginning, as Lyell later, must have seen in him that happy conjunction of tastes and faculties which made his genius for science, or at least they must have perceived the promise of it.

All the circumstances of his life seem to have conspired to favor this special endowment. The very fact that the classics did nothing for him helped him: he was relieved from the confusion caused by complex and disturbing elements in a varied education; he had no difficulty in making his choice; he was not afterward drawn aside by the existence of other unsatisfied tastes, artificially cultivated; he had no ambition for that roundness of development which is a fetich of modern times; he did not fritter away his time and energy in directions in which he could not excel. It is not meant to hold up his luck in this respect as exemplary good fortune, but only to emphasize the way in which it told on his success. He was not less happy in the exterior circumstances of his life, and in those things which come by a kind of hazard. His appointment to the *Beagle* was a Napoleonic opportunity, and in looking back he realized its value to the full: "The voyage of the *Beagle* has been by far the most important event in my life, and has determined my whole career; yet it depended on so small a circumstance as my uncle offering to drive me thirty miles to Shrewsbury, which few uncles would have done, and on such a trifle as the shape of my nose." But one ought not to exaggerate the element of chance; and though Captain Fitz-roy had continued to disapprove of Darwin's nose, and his uncle had not interfered to overcome the elder Darwin's objection to the voyage on the score that it would be an unbecoming adventure for a prospective clergyman, and on other

equally good or better grounds, yet we might have had our great naturalist. The voyage of the *Beagle*, nevertheless, was the turning-point of Darwin's life. He obtained in the course of it the first real training of his mind; it brought before him several departments of science in such a way that he approached them with active and original thoughts, and was constantly forced into an inquiring and bold attitude toward the novel material he found; it gave him five years alone with science, and free from any near master to whom he might have formed the habit of deferring. Huxley does not overstate the material advantages that this training brought with it: "In Physical Geography, in Geology proper, in Geographical Distribution, and in Paleontology, he had acquired an extensive practical training during the voyage of the *Beagle*. He knew of his own knowledge the way in which the raw materials of these branches of science are acquired, and was therefore a most competent judge of the speculative strain they would bear. That which he needed, after his return to England, was a corresponding acquaintance with Anatomy and Development, and their relations to Taxonomy, and he acquired this by his Cirripede work." It is to be noticed that during his voyage in the *Beagle* he became convinced of the "wonderful superiority of Lyell's manner of treating geology" over every other author's. This is an illustration, like that drawn from Paley, of the character of his mind as primarily a reasoning mind; for what he recognized in Lyell was a method. It was on this voyage, too, that he became ambitious; he began to believe that he might add to the stock of human knowledge, and the stimulation of the welcome his success was meeting in England was evidently keenly felt.

He put his whole heart into the work, and few passages are more stirring than those which describe his zeal in his first really scientific enthusiasm, after he had given up his gun as of less use than his eye, and had found sport, even with his fond love of it, an inferior pleasure to the pursuit of knowledge; then, alone in the Andes and the Southern Ocean, he came to his majority.

Mr. Huxley, in the passage cited, has noted the need Darwin had for further training, particularly as a naturalist. He obtained this by his work on the Cirripedes, an eight years' labor. This concluded his education. Of the value of it merely as training and to himself, Sir Joseph Hooker says: "Your father recognized three stages in his career as a biologist: the mere collector at Cambridge; the collector and observer in the Beagle, and for some years afterwards; and the trained naturalist after, and only after, the Cirripede work. That he was a thinker all along is true enough." Huxley says that Darwin never did a wiser thing than when he devoted himself to these years of patient toil. Darwin himself does not indicate that he purposely chose to do this monograph in order to educate himself, and he doubts whether it was worth the time. He seems to have been gradually drawn into it, and to have finished it because he had gone so far. When he had done with it, at any rate, if not before, he was a thoroughly furnished man for such investigation as was to be his title to lasting fame. He had come to be thus equipped by the mere course of his life; by beetles at Cambridge, and the Beagle, and the Cirripedes. Yet if he had planned his education from the start for the express purpose of dealing in the most masterly way with the mass of diversified details out of which the "Origin of Species" and the

other derivative coördinate works grew, it is hard to see in what way his course could have been improved. The ill-health which seized him so soon was almost a blessing in disguise, since it isolated him from the distractions of modern London, made him value his life and his time, and possibly, by the economy of his strength which it necessitated, aided as much as it hindered him.

One need not follow him through the composition of his books, or even through the elaboration of the theory of natural selection, during the many years that it was growing in his laboratory of notes. For him the formulating of that theory was inevitable: it seems, as one observes him, natural enough to have been foretold of him; but it followed, not from his position, which another man might have occupied, but from his genius. The qualities of mind which it required were not many, and one understands readily why it is so commonly said that all is explained by his power of observation and its vast range; but it did require one high faculty of the mind, and a rare one, which Darwin had preëminently among the men of his time — the faculty, namely, of discerning the lines of inquiry in a mass of as yet unrelated facts. He somewhere says that he had found it harder, perhaps, to put the question than it was to reach the answer. This power is the great economizer of mental energy, in any branch of investigation; it is, to the man who has it, equivalent to a compass; and to Darwin it was the one talent without which his stores of knowledge would have been no more than a heap of unclassified specimens in a museum cellar. Moral and physical qualities he had, besides; his patience and his practised vision were invaluable; but it was the intellectual part that penetrated the secrets of nature. This sense of the problem, this eye

for the question, was most serviceable to his success. His acuteness in perceiving the importance of the infinitely little, which is often mentioned as one of his distinguishing traits, was only an incident of this larger endowment; and his power to make other men useful to him, specialists in horticulture or physiology, or even common observing men, was only the knowledge of how to put practical questions. The point is worth emphasizing, because in this age of the accumulation of scientific detail it is too apt to be forgotten that the thinking mind is as rare in science as in other departments, and is, nevertheless, the indispensable thing which makes a man great.

Here it is worth while to advert to that persistent discussion respecting the nature of a modern education, which Darwin's experience is bound to bring forward with renewed vigor. His testimony, both in the chart of himself which he gave Mr. Galton and in the account he wrote for his children, is unequivocal. He says he was self-taught; that his training at the university was of no use to him, speaking generally, and that the classics in particular were barren. He seems to be quite correct in his statement; the claim that his powers of observation and comparison were really developed by schoolboy attention to Latin and Greek terminations is purely pedagogical; nor is there any reason to question that men of genius can be successful, achieve eminent greatness for themselves, and do work of the highest value to society without immediate obligation to those studies usually called the humanities. This is nothing new. Instances of self-education for special careers are to be found in other walks than those of science: in war, in administration, and generally in active life, and not infrequently in literature itself. But it is worth observing what testi-

mony these volumes bear to the wonderful vitality of the Greek intelligence. Speaking of the theory of Pangenesis, Darwin writes to a correspondent that the views of Hippocrates "seem almost identical with mine — merely a change of terms, and an application of them to classes of facts necessarily unknown to the old philosopher." Again, he writes of Aristotle: "From quotations which I had seen I had a high notion of Aristotle's merits, but I had not the most remote notion what a wonderful man he was. Linnæus and Cuvier have been my two gods, though in very different ways, but they were mere schoolboys to old Aristotle. . . . I never realized, before reading your book, to what an enormous consummation of labor we owe even our common knowledge." A more striking passage is that of Huxley's, where he says: "The oldest of all philosophies, that of evolution, was bound hand and foot and cast into utter darkness during the millennium of theological scholasticism. But Darwin poured new lifeblood into the ancient frame; the bonds burst, and the revived thought of ancient Greece has proved itself to be a more adequate expression of the universal order of things than any of the schemes which have been accepted by the credulity and welcomed by the superstition of seventy later generations of men." Rediscovery, however, is not obligation; and, perhaps, if Darwin had been thoroughly imbued with the Greek mode of looking upon the universe, he would not have been really indebted to it for his own views; for he went upon different grounds in forming his conceptions. The real question is, not whether Darwin succeeded without Greek influences, but whether he lost anything because of his failure to assimilate them. The answer seems plain. It is written all over

these pages, and is expressly given by Darwin in more than one passage.

No words can be too strong to express the loveliness of Darwin's personality, or the moral beauty of his character. In his biography, it is true, he is presented as the man of science; but he is seen occasionally in other aspects. He was a dutiful, respectful, and affectionate son, at the outset of his life. He thought his father was sometimes unjust, but he always spoke of him as "the wisest man he ever knew"; and there is a touching passage in one of his letters home, when his father had sent him a note: "I almost cried for pleasure at receiving it; it was very kind, thinking of writing to me." He was also, in his turn, an admirable father, considerate, patient, and very tender. One of his sons tells a most significant anecdote of once having drawn on himself some indignant exclamation, "almost with fury," and the end of it being that "next morning, at seven o'clock or so, he came into my bed-room and sat on my bed, and said he had not been able to sleep, from the thought that he had been so angry with me, and after a few more kind words he left me." His description of his little daughter who died is of itself enough to show the extraordinarily fine quality of his affections; and in general his relations with his children are almost ideal in gentleness, kindness, and companionableness. He was also a good friend and acquaintance. In a word, in his private social relations he was exemplary, judged by the standard of a high civilization. He was not without a sense, too, of public duty. He felt strongly only upon the subject of slavery, and this was largely because of his travels in slave countries. He was interested in philanthropic efforts to some degree, and especially in furthering

the increase of kindness to animals. But he was remote from public affairs, and led even in his sympathies a life somewhat narrowly confined to his own circle and his work in science. In other parts of his character there is nothing to displease. He was modest and just, and free from envy, conscientious to an extreme, and as ready to give as to receive help in all ways. He was more pleased with his fame than he acknowledged; he cared deeply for the success of his theory, and was well aware of its influence on his own reputation as one to be classed with Newton's; he liked praise and distinction, though he limited his desire to the commendation and respect of naturalists; but this is only to wish to be approved by the most competent judges. He was fair to Wallace, and exhibited the best of tempers toward him; but between the lines one reads that he was nettled and annoyed by the incident, and it must be concluded that as he was ambitious in youth, he was desirous of having his due in manhood, and valued fame.

This was a character which might well spare the humanities. The fact remains that he did spare them. What he lost was culture. The confession that he makes of the gradual atrophy of his esthetic tastes will be long quoted as one of the most remarkable facts of his life. He began with a susceptibility to music, which by his son's account he did not lose; with a liking for poetry, such that he read "The Excursion" twice, and he would not have read it except for pleasure; and he used to take Milton with him in his pocket. In art he went but a little way, if, indeed, he ever really had any eye for it. He was religious, as an English boy usually is; but his interest in belief regarding religious subjects died out, and, what is of more consequence, the emotions which were

called out by it in early life ceased to be exercised. There was a deadening, in other words, of all his nature, except so far as it was fed by his work, his family, and his friends in its intellectual and social parts. So complete was this change that it affected even his appreciation of beautiful scenery, which had evidently given him keen delight in his youth and travels. He dates this change from just after his thirtieth year, when he became absorbed in scientific pursuits as his profession. Something, no doubt, and perhaps much, is to be set down to the effect of his ill-health, which left him with diminished energies for any recreation; his strength was exhausted in his few hours of work. He was himself so convinced that his life had been narrowed in these ways, that he says if he had it to live over he would have planned to give a certain time habitually to poetry.

It would be too much to say that the failure of Darwin to appropriate the humane elements in his university education accounts in any perceptible degree for these defects. In culture, as in science, the self-making power of the man counts heavily; and there is such inefficiency in those whose duty it is to give youth a liberal education from classical sources, there are such wrong methods and unintelligent aims in the universities, that it might easily prove to be the case that a student with the most cordial temperament toward the humanities would profit only imperfectly by his residence at seats of learning. In spite of these reservations however, the Greek culture is the historical source of what are traditionally the higher elements in our intellectual life, and has been for most cultivated men the practical discipline of their minds. But it is to be further observed that the example of Darwin, if it should be set up as showing

that Greek culture is unnecessary in modern days, goes just as directly and completely to prove that all literary education, as well by modern as by ancient authors, is superfluous. It is enough to indicate to what a length the argument must be carried, if it is at all admitted. The important matter is rather the question, How much was Darwin's life injured for himself by his loss of culture, in the fact that some of those sources of intellectual delight which are reputed the most precious for civilized man were closed to him?

The blank page in this charming biography is the page of spiritual life. There is nothing written there. The entire absence of an element which enters commonly into all men's lives in some degree is a circumstance as significant as it is astonishing. Never was a man more alive to what is visible and tangible, or in any way matter of sensation; on the sides of his nature where an appeal could be made, never was a man more responsive; but there were parts in which he was blind and dull. Just as the boy failed to be interested in many things, the man failed too; and he disregarded what did not interest him with the same ease at sixty as at twenty. What did interest him was the immediately present, and he dealt with it admirably, both in the intellectual and the moral world; but what was remote was as if it were not. The spiritual element in life is not remote, but it is not matter of sensation, and Darwin lived as if there were no such thing; it belongs to the region of emotion and imagination, and those perceptions which deal with the nature of man in its contrast with the material world. Poetry, art, music, the emotional influences of nature, the idealizations of moral life, are the means by which men take possession of this

inner world of man; to which, for man at least, nature in all its immensity is subsidiary. Darwin's insensibility to the higher life — for so men agree to call it — was partly, if not wholly, induced by his absorption in scientific pursuits in the spirit of materialism. We praise him for his achievements, we admire his character, and we feel the full charm of his temperament; he delights us in every active manifestation of his nature. We do not now learn for the first time that a man may be good without being religious, and successful without being liberally educated, and worthy of honor without being spiritual; but a man may be all this and yet be incomplete. Great as Darwin was as a thinker, and winning as he remains as a man, those elements in which he was deficient are the noblest part of our nature.

DOBELL'S LIFE AND LETTERS

It was no fault of Sydney Dobell that the disparity between the excellence of his rare natural gifts and the meagerness of their literary result is so great, for the difficulties which beset him made partial failure inevitable. The disastrous nature of his early education has seldom been paralleled in the records of blighted genius, and in manhood, when he had emancipated himself from it to some degree, successive misfortunes struck down and maimed his powers. His parents were members of a Church which had been founded by his mother's father, a free-thinking Christian of the last century, to bring about a return to the apostolic practice, and was thought by them to be the germ of a great religious reform. They believed that Sydney, their first-born, was the chosen instrument of God for this work. The child was precocious in mind and endowed with all the susceptibility to emotion which belongs to the poetic temperament. Every new sign of intellectual strength or religious fervor was to his parents a fresh proof of the boy's divine calling, and their injudicious zeal stimulated a development which would have been abnormally rapid under the best care. His mission was instilled into his thoughts when he was four years old; at eight years his diary is filled with theology and his waste-paper with verses; at ten he falls in love; at twelve, enters his father's office and begins a life of business routine; at fourteen he is prostrated with nervous fever; at fifteen,

is engaged to be married, and considering the publication of a drama on Napoleon which he had written and Campbell had read; at seventeen, we read of long-continued and exhausting prayer; eloquent church oratory follows; at twenty he is married; at twenty-three the blow falls, and he is prostrated with a nearly fatal disease which left him a man of broken health. The history of these years is given scantily in these volumes, but there are many indications of their unnatural life; his father says, for example, that in his delirium, when the sense of locality and the memory of faces were lost, he talked rationally on moral and reflective subjects; and his wife says of their courtship, in a remark of blended humor and pathos, "the more we loved, the more we prayed." He himself gives the clearest glimpse of the nervous intoxication of his boyhood in a letter to his sister, where he says, "I shall not cease to look back on the four or five years preceding my illness with a kind of self-reverence — as to an impossible saintdom to which I would not return, but which I can never equal on this side the grave. I see that I have a wider mission and a rougher excellence before me; but I cannot look back without a melancholy interest to the years when I never thought a thought or said a word but under the very eyes of God." Such experience necessarily left indelible traces; the practical result of his education was a physical blow, and it is easy to observe in his letters after this time symptoms of lingering disease, as when he speaks of having a double consciousness of locality, or of being seized by spontaneous trains of thought of unusual brilliance, but which he cannot recollect on coming out of this state.

With such a mind and body he began his literary

career, against the remonstrance of his parents, who still believed in his apostolic mission. He published two dramas which have passed into literature, and a volume of war-lyrics. He was contemplating an epic on the millennium which should be his crowning work, and seems to have looked for no activity in any other field than literature. But ten years of writing, study, and business, added to the constant and wearying care of an invalid wife, overcame his shaken constitution, and at thirty-three a second illness practically put an end to his career. The two invalids tried all climates with little success; accident followed accident; he fell into a Roman drain and injured his spine; another fall from his horse nearly proved fatal; relapse followed relapse until after seventeen years, "wherein," he says, "the keen perception of all that should be done, and that so bitterly cries for doing, accompanies the consciousness of all I might but cannot do," he died in 1874.

Such warping and blighting influences made Sydney Dobell's public service fall so far short of his extraordinary capacities as to amount practically to failure. His senses were abnormally acute, like those of a savage, and this made his appreciation of natural loveliness remarkably keen; his powers of imagination and sympathy and his supersubtle reflective faculty completed his poetic endowment. The bent of his mind, the surcharging of his soul with religious emotion and mystical feeling, led him sometimes into that region of dreamy poetic conjecture with which readers of the transcendentalists are familiar, where the object, too vague for thought, is grasped at through symbols, and the qualities of the symbol extended fancifully to the unknown object. This, for example, reads like an excerpt from

Novalis: "What if the visible universe stand in the relation to the Divine of the brain to the human soul; humanity upon its surface answering to the cineritious matter; these past six thousand years a passing illness of the Eternal Nature, and its scheme of salvation and ultimate golden issue a process of Divine physiology?" It is not often that he gets so far off his feet as in this passage. Here is one of mystical suggestion, which in a letter to Charlotte Brontë he says was struck out of an article by the sapient editor of the "Eclectic": "Yea; O divine earth! O incommunicable beauty! wearing thy crown of thorns and having on the purple robes of immemorial sunsets, we have parted thy garments among us, and for thy vesture have we cast lots"; and he is led to this *O altitudo!* because he has thrown down his pen "helpless before this unapproachable world," and the unapproachable world was merely apple-trees in blossom — "the very Avalon of apple-trees that makes an awful rose of dawn toward the east." Such was the fervor and intensity of his poetic moods. On more prosaic ground he could be sensible enough, but his prejudices were sometimes very curious. "Aurora Leigh" he thought no poem because written by a woman, and he held "all feminine literature to be an error and an anomaly." To a sister he writes: "The passion of writing, especially among ladies, is the mental and spiritual nuisance of this age. What the young people of the day want to learn is that authorship, unless it be of the very best — the best and most competent minds expressed in the very best ways — is worse than useless"; and again, to resist "a temptation which bids fair to stain with ink the sweetest sanctuaries of life, and taint with the inevitable evils of every unnatural and abnormal gratifica-

tion three-fourths of the women of England." Toward the theory of women's rights and the theory of the equality of men he was extremely hostile; but in politics, in which he interested himself much, he was in enthusiastic sympathy with the Liberals. We read with wicked pleasure the letter in which he says he spent an hour walking in his garden, and repeating "the damnation of hell" after hearing that Mazzini was entrapped in Nuremberg, and with amusement the account of how Victor Emmanuel lost a present of one of the poet's dogs because he imprisoned Garibaldi. He had many interests — a man of business all his life as well as a poet and orator, a liberal as well as an aristocrat, the broadest of Broad Churchmen as well as an earnest Christian, a lover of horses and dogs, used to the saddle, the gun, and the rod; he was the most affable as well as the most merciless of critics, and he was the dearest of friends. Various developed in these and many other directions, he saved much from the wreck; his private life evinces throughout a refined and noble character. He was a gentleman of the highest type, who made the most valuable acquisitions in life and shared them as widely as he could, who united grace of action in doing a thing to "the beauty of reason or feeling that causes it to be done"; he used to say, "To do the useful is the tenure by which we hold this world, to have done it beautifully the condition of our transit to a better," and called attention repeatedly to "that moral truth still older than formularized religion — that relation between the charitable heart and the idealizing eye, which the earliest Greeks unconsciously asserted when they entitled the Graces the Charities." To see how these principles found harmonious expression in a daily life of such pain

and disappointment mitigates the sense of wasteful loss which these memoirs arouse; his poetry is unwrought ore, his published prose stray leaves of thought, but in himself it is not too much to say he came near to his own conception of the poet's ideal life: "Thou wert the courteste knight that ever bore shield; thou wert the truest friend that ever bestrode horse; thou wert the truest lover that ever loved woman; thou wert the kindest man that ever struck with sword; thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights; thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall with ladies; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever laid lance in rest."

WILLIAM BARNES, THE DORSETSHIRE POET

WILLIAM BARNES belongs to a most interesting class of self-made men, who, with exceptional faculties, make themselves marked persons, but yet rise little, if at all, from their original place among the people. Such a one was our Elihu Burritt, whom Barnes recalls by his special aptitude for languages; such are those workmen of whom we hear from time to time by the report of some Ruskin who has discovered them, who have a native taste for botany or geology, or it may be poetry. They are distinguished rather in their class than among the intellectual group with which, had they been more fortunately born and placed, they would have been naturally associated. Barnes was an unusual example of the type. He met with more success, and actually rose in social station; but he had the stamp of his country origin strongly impressed on him, and he never ceased to be thoroughly a man of the people from whom he sprang. He is of interest, also, as an excellent specimen of the sort of "original" which we appropriate too exclusively to our own nation; he possessed the versatility, the knack, the tool-using faculty, and the mental curiosity that we associate with the Yankee character, and his biography has the double worth of a life active in mind and in work.

He came of farmer stock in Dorset, but in his babyhood he had not the physical vigor and frame that ought

to be the birthright of one destined to be a farm-hand. It is related that some wise old woman comforted his mother with the remark, "Never you mind what he looks like, he'll get his living by learning-books and such like." He had some schooling, and was early put at a clerk's desk in solicitors' offices, where his good penmanship saved him from holding a plough, and, as he spent his leisure in acquiring knowledge from books, he early set up a school, and throve so well that he married in 1827 and took a larger house for himself and his pupils. He had the success he deserved, and, eight years later, finally settled in Dorchester, with which place his name and labors were closely associated during his active years. He had already shown the variety of his tastes by engraving wood-blocks, not with much talent, but for publication, nevertheless, and he had written verses in the newspapers. He made himself acquainted with many languages — Welsh and Hindustanee among the rest — and had begun his philological studies. Being discontented with the text-books used in his school, he wrote an arithmetic, a geography, and a grammar for the use of his pupils, upon what he thought better principles. He became a principal founder of the Dorset Museum, and took his boys out on scientific walks as a part of their education, and also to get specimens in the newly opened railway cuttings. He was an antiquarian, too, and took a leading part in the Society which examined and speculated about British and Roman remains; and, to mention a few other of his multifarious employments, he painted doors "artistically," as well as drew in water-color, made boxes, invented a pair of swimming-shoes which would not work, turned his own chessmen on a lathe, produced a quadrant and

an instrument to describe ellipses, and played the flute, violin, and piano. He had the fixed habit of bringing his notions to practical forms, and is found regulating the binding of his books and the margin and frames of his water-colors by "harmonic proportions"; and, to give one capital instance which does as well as any to put this aspect of his character before us, he adopted the theory that Nature never makes mistakes in colors, and that her juxtapositions must be the true harmonies, acting on which, he studied mosses, leaves, and fruits, and used the tints as arranged in them in his own sketching and decoration. Thus, on purchasing two old high-backed chairs, he chose for their covering "a certain gray-green damask, with a yellow-brown binding, the tints found on the upper and under side of a beautiful lichen."

He had determined in the midst of all this on entering the church; and in 1837 put himself down on the books of St. John's College, Cambridge, as a ten years' man. At the end of that time, having meanwhile been a prolific author in the magazines and in books, he received a small cure of £13 value, three miles from his school, and held it for five years, walking out and back every Sunday. His life went on in this way with teaching and preaching, philology, antiquities, lectures in the country, a diary in all languages, and poems in dialect, which had always been popular in the district and slowly attracted the attention of literary men at London. But hard times came to him, his wife was dead (in his polyglot journal he wrote her name at the end of each day's entry for forty years afterwards), his school declined, and it was a matter of rejoicing when Palmerston put him on the civil list with £70 pension. At last, when his friend Colonel Damer gave him the living at

Came in 1862, he found a home for his old age, and congenial employment until his death in 1886. As a rector he was much beloved, and went in and out among his people like one of them. His daughter tells of a woman saying to her, "There, miss, we do all of us love the passon, that we do; he be so plain. Why, bless you, I don't no more mind telling o' un all my little pains and troubles than if he was my grandmother. I don't mean any disrespec', miss"; and this story tells its own tale. He remained vigorous until near the end, and died in advanced age with the honor of the people among whom he lived and the respect of those in the larger world who knew his acquirements and talents.

But his biography was written because he was a poet. The name philologist is also upon the title-page; his philological work, however, was cumbrous, and had in it elements of crankiness. It consisted of numberless writings, some of which brought him £5 for the copy-right, and some of which have never found a publisher at all. The *opera majora* in these are a "Universal Grammar of all Languages," an attempt at a rational formal analysis of speech which shall be true of each particular tongue or dialect; and secondly, 'Tiw,' an analytical scheme of roots and stems. He had also much at heart the reform of the English by eliminating all except Teutonic elements, and restoring to it such purity as the Welsh possesses; his practice of using in his later books only pure Teutonic words, numbers of which he was of course obliged to coin, with his habit of using figure-symbols, made them unreadable. Such are the traits of his philology. But his feeling for the plain and expressive quality, the homeliness, of country speech, to which his philological dreams were allied, is at the

root of his extraordinary success as a poet in dialect. At the importunity of friends he translated some of these Dorset idyls into ordinary English speech, and the volume had little success — quite rightly, for the charm was gone. In his English verses he did not exceed commonplace. His poetic inspiration refused to flow except from the living rock of the speech of the country folk which had been familiar to his childhood. There is in all real dialect verse a certain correspondence of the feeling and the words, a fitness as inexplicable as that of a peasant's costume to his body, an adjustment of thought and burring inflections as perfect as is made in all things by use and wont; and this is the main element of their delight to the cultivated. All are reaches after harmony, but here is a harmony that seems before art, and comes to us like unbreathed-on nature. The peculiar forms are easily caught and understood, and they give the tang of life to the country manners which they are used to describe, to the simple sentiment and direct emotion which they convey.

Barnes had poetic feeling of the primitive kind, and so long as he dealt with this Dorset life that was interesting and dear to him, and used its own century-molded vital speech, he wrote verses with a quality like the charm of a pastoral picture or the sight of the cows in the pool staring at you. These poems won him the attention of some London folk — Mrs. Norton among them, and a Mr. Tennant, whose letters to him are most pleasant in tact and temper; and after a while Patmore and Allingham became his friends, and Tennyson exchanged visits with him. It is said here that the "Northern Farmer" was written under the stimulus of this incident. Palgrave praised Barnes very highly.

"This aged poet seems to me to stand second only to Tennyson in the last half century. He has a truth united always to beauty in his drawing of character and country ways — a pure love of nature, such as one sees in the best Greek or Roman writers, exalted and rendered more tender by his devout Christian spirit. I know not, also, if any of our poets have surpassed him in the number of original pictures or motives which his three precious volumes display." There is something of the over-exquisite critic in this, but it should be said that Palgrave has since explained that, in placing Barnes "second only to Tennyson," he meant to class him "with, not above," our other poets "in the foremost line of those after Tennyson." Still, his remarks indicate well enough the lines of Barnes's excellence. The Bishop praised rather the influence of his life and words in his community: "He has helped the people hereabouts to feel what they can be and do." To write verses to please Mr. Palgrave's nice taste, and to have been helpful by them to the humble people of Dorset, is to cover a wide reach of life, one thinks; it is a test of the singleness and simplicity of poetic art.

He was always eccentric, it seems, in dress. The poncho, the plaid, the flowing cassock, and silver buckles served in turn, but he was especially fond of a red cap, and perhaps it was a favorite color in other articles; at least it flashes out finely in this sketch of him by Mr. Gosse in a letter to Patmore:

"Hardy and I went on Monday last to Came Rectory, where he lies bedridden. It is curious that he is dying as picturesquely as he lived. We found him in bed in his study, his face turned to the window, where the light came streaming in through flowering paints, his brown books on all sides

of him save one, the wall behind him hung with old green tapestry. He had a scarlet bedgown on, a kind of soft biretta of red wool on his head, from which his long white hair escaped on to the pillow; his gray beard grown very long upon his breast; his complexion, which you recollect as richly bronzed, has become blanched by keeping indoors, and is now waxily white where it is not waxily pink; the blue eyes half shut, restless under languid lids. I wish I could paint for you the strange effect of this old, old man, lying in cardinal scarlet in his white bed, the only bright spot in the gloom of all these books."

MR. RUSKIN'S EARLY YEARS

AN interesting article might be written upon the influence of the novel upon modern autobiography. The novel has, indeed, affected literature in many ways, and been felt in both history and poetry; but the taste which it has bred in the incidents and characters of ordinary life has given a great extension to the scope of a man's account of his own career. It would hardly have occurred to our elder authors to delineate their parents in the way that Carlyle drew his father and mother, or to introduce into their reminiscences finished portraits of any persons who had not won some distinction. Gibbon's autobiography is a capital instance of a life told without the setting which has now become usual; it has no such background. In the papers which Ruskin has written about his early years, there is no like reserve. He includes in them his family and all his relatives, the home acquaintances and business partners, the clerks of the firm and the servants of the house, his companions and valets; the work, in other words, is conceived in the new spirit of autobiography, and though he is the hero, there are a host of minor characters and a crowd of trivial incidents which in other days would not have been thought worthy of record. It appeals often, like the novel, to our interest in general life as much as to our curiosity about Ruskin in his distinct personality.

In these pages, too, Ruskin is an ungrown youth; his account hardly touches on his active career, and

nowhere reaches his maturity. The formative years of life are, in a sense, very important, but they are at best only the preface; what the man at last became and accomplished is the matter that is worth knowing, unless one is specially concerned with education; the question how he was developed is subsidiary. The narrative is much taken up with childish and futile things, and does not show the sources of Ruskin's genius, but the conditions under which he grew; and these were such as to account more for his defects than his excellences. A great part of what is told is indeed entirely irrelevant, and would have been as interesting in any other man's life. One or two leading topics, however, may be chosen, which have most bearing on his qualities, and either illustrate his temperament, or seem to have been determining factors in his character; and the principal of these is his religious training. Ruskin himself lays great stress on the fact that his mother made him early acquainted with the Bible; she read it with him for years, and went through it in course several times, besides obliging him to commit chapters of it, and the Scotch versions of the psalms in addition. He was, as one would say, piously trained; the exercise was strenuous while it lasted, and it ended only with his fourteenth year. He thinks it formed and confirmed a taste for the noble element in style, and that it was also morally of great effect. He was an only child, and a solitary one; this, no doubt, had an influence in lending solemnity to his religious associations, and his beliefs were not early disturbed. When he went to Oxford, the steady Bible-reading had ended, and in its place, he says, "was substituted my own private reading of a chapter morning and evening, and of course saying the Lord's Prayer after it, and asking for

everything that was nice for myself and my family; after which I waked or slept, without much thought of anything but my earthly affairs, whether by night or day. It had never entered into my head to doubt a word of the Bible, though I saw well enough already that its words were to be understood otherwise than I had been taught; but the more I believed it, the less it did me any good. It was all very well for Abraham to do what angels bid him — so would I, if any angels bid me; but none had ever appeared to me that I knew of, not even Adele, who couldn't be an angel because she was a Roman Catholic. . . . On the whole, it seemed to me all that was required of *me* was to say my prayers, go to church, learn my lessons, obey my parents, and enjoy my dinner." His religious training had accomplished no more than to put him in possession of the Protestant tradition. It was some years after, when he was twenty-six, that he was first "put to any serious trial of prayer." He had been ill, and was now going home from Italy. "Between the Campo Santo and Santa Maria Novella I had been brought into some knowledge of the relations that might truly exist between God and his creatures; and thinking what my father and mother would feel if I did not get home to them through those poplar avenues, I fell gradually into the temper, and more or less tacit offering of very real prayer, which lasted patiently through two long days and what I knew of the nights on the road home. On the third day, as I was about coming in sight of Paris, what people who are in the habit of praying know as the consciousness of answer came to me, and a certainty that the illness, which had all this while increased, if anything, would be taken away." Two days after, he found himself "in the inn

at Beauvais, entirely well, with a thrill of conscious happiness altogether new." This is the solitary instance of personal religious feeling in the volume, and apparently from Ruskin's comment upon the incident, it was one never repeated. To what extent his religious training fortified his moral fervor, besides enabling him to enter into the medieval feeling in sacred art, is another matter; but the tone of the passages cited show that he holds mentally an attitude of superiority toward common Christian belief and devotions.

A second main characteristic of his education was his separation from healthy association with those of his own age, the care with which he was kept from youthful exercises, and, in general, the making a home-boy of him. He was not at all indulged; most playthings were denied him; he was taught to be proper, his faults were followed by the usual penalties, and he seems to have been reduced to an extremely angelic docility, so that he sat for years in a quiet manner in his own niche in the drawing-room, listening every evening to his father reading romance and poetry to his mother, and no more thinking of doing anything disagreeable than a star of falling from heaven. But, more than this, the parents had plans for him as a child of promise, for which the sherry trade would not afford sufficient scope. Their conviction of his genius was formed early and grew with portentous rapidity, and his father's ideal for his future was "that I should enter college into the best society; take all the prizes every year, and a double first to finish with; marry Lady Clara Vere de Vere; write poetry as good as Byron's, only pious; preach sermons as good as Bossuet's, only Protestant; be made at forty Bishop of Winchester, and at fifty Primate of England."

The ideal was not so defined as this until he was ready for Oxford, but the vision of the future bishop seems to have loomed up while the child was of very tender years, and it was reluctantly let go. There is one reminiscence of the disappointment here, on occasion of a conversation between his father and an artist, who were lamenting "what an amiable clergyman was lost in me. 'Yes,' said my father, with tears in his eyes (true and tender tears as ever father shed), 'he would have been a bishop.'" Between the idea that the child was to be a great man and the foolish isolation of him from natural playmates, a remarkable conceit was developed, which Ruskin is only too frank in acknowledging; he heaps terms of ridicule upon his childish self, and the reader is not disposed to say him nay, but rather to find it a great misfortune of his life that his vanity was coddled in a safe seclusion from the disillusion of a public school. But it is curious, side by side with these comic anathemas on his boyish "High-Mightiness," to come upon the mature judgments he has formed of himself, and does not hesitate to proclaim; he never learned the lesson of modesty, nor did perception of his childish faults enlighten him in respect to weaknesses of his manhood. He quotes Mazzini as having said of him, "in conversation authentically reported a year or two before his death, that I had 'the most analytic mind in Europe'; an opinion in which," he adds, "so far as I am acquainted with Europe, I am myself entirely disposed to concur." Elsewhere he deplores the loss in him of "a fine landscape or figure-outline engraver," but this loss he mourns less than "the incalculable one to geology;" for, he says, if, in Wales, his father and mother "had given me but a shaggy scrap of a Welsh pony, and left me in charge

of a good Welsh guide and of his wife, if I needed any coddling, they would have made a man of me then and there, and afterwards the comfort of their own hearts, and probably the first geologist of my time in Europe." It was lucky that they did not try to make him an ichthyologist, at any rate. When he got the "Poissons Fossiles," he saw that "Agassiz was a mere blockhead to have paid for all that good drawing of the nasty, ugly things, and that it didn't matter a stale herring to any mortal whether they had any names or not, . . . and that the book ought to have been called after the lithographer, *his* fishes, only with their scales counted and called bad names by subservient Monsieur Agassiz." This is a mere explosion of bad temper, but it helps us to guess what sort of "a first geologist of Europe" he would have been, and to reckon how he would have fared pitted against Lyell. It may be doubted, too, whether he would have kept very long to the management of that wished-for Welsh pony: the parents did try to have him taught riding, both by a groom and at a riding-school, but he had too much facility in slipping off, and was evidently entirely disinclined to learn.

The isolation of his childhood no doubt threw him back upon himself and induced his precocity. Stevenson remarked upon one virtue of the Scotch Sabbath, in that it made a boy who could not employ himself in his usual play think out of mere idleness, and the time being a solemn one his thoughts were touched by it. Mr. Ruskin's every-day life was such a Scotch Sabbath. It was empty of most young interests, affections, and amusements. Listening to his father's readings from Scott, and Cervantes, and Byron, the boy naturally took to literature in imitative verse and prose, just as he wrote

abstracts of sermons that he had heard preached; and he also took to drawing in a similarly obvious way. Whatever literary or artistic talent was possible in him was bound to come out under such circumstances, and power of expression would grow with practice; and so those first signs of promise put forth which confirmed his parents' ambition for him as a piously Byronic bishop. This was the compensation for what he lost, but what he lost was never to be recovered, for all that; and the worst of his loss, besides practical faculty and habits of manliness, was the exercise of his affections. He has cared throughout his life, he says — and this is certainly true of his earlier career — for inanimate things, mountains and clouds chiefly; and one reason of this is, that he, to use his own words, "had nothing to love" in his childhood and youth, and indeed did not love anything; for his affection for his parents was not of the intimate kind, and he looked on them as a part of the beneficent universe, like the sun and the moon. This is his own account of the matter; and he regrets the circumstance, curiously enough, not because of such results as we have indicated, but because, when he fell in love with that Adele who "couldn't be an angel because she was a Roman Catholic," he did not know how to manage himself. His confession of this first fit of amorousness is one of the oddest things in the volumes, and indeed all his references to the various maidens who attracted his roving fancy, or his parents' more prudent eyes, are astonishing. Adele was a bright Spanish girl, the daughter of his father's partner in sherry, and knew a great deal more than her adorer, who fell in love with her while she was visiting the Ruskins, and found the course of his malady rapid and severe. He wooed her by displaying

his powers in Protestant argument and romantic narrative, and by his bad French; but she was only amused, and the lover, who was still young in his teens, was disconsolate in the old fashion. It was some years before he recovered from the disease; and reminiscences of the time seem to be disagreeable enough, for he rivals his contempt for his childish conceit by his ridicule of himself as a lovesick youth. There is nothing in the story, however, that excites the reader's pity; in this, as well as the other cases, one has a pleased sense of listening to much youthful confession in which there is not the least seriousness. The feeling was real enough, but it was "fancy," as we say, and not passion, with all the unreality of sentimentalism in the traditional spring. Oxford apparently cured him — change of scene and something to think about.

But Ruskin is only a small part of the story; and one is not sorry that this is the case, for he was not an interesting child, and his boyhood was without the qualities that make boyhood attractive. The scenes in which he lived, however, and the people with whom he dwelt are drawn by the hand of the grown man, and have more of himself in them than has the manikin he then was. The banks of the Tay and the humble relatives at Croydon help his narrative very much, not to mention the view of the Alps from Schaffhausen, where he thinks his destiny was determined for him at fourteen, or the days in the Campo Santo, or the revelation of the infernal in life that the volcanic Neapolitan country was to him, in his own belief; at first sight. The journeys with his parents exhibit their character very pleasantly, and they were excellent persons; their devotion to their son was entire, and he was at times a trying young man.

The first acquaintance with Turner, and the gradually increasing interest of the family, not only in his work, but in artists generally, furnish agreeable passages; the fortunes of the servants and other connections of the family, and the sketches of the acquaintance of the household who used occasionally to visit them, are interesting in the way of episode, though the manner is somewhat Carlylean, too grim, too indifferent, too consciously superior. Oxford yields one good chapter, and, as was to be anticipated in the case of a youth such as we have intimated Ruskin was, it is not without humor. He entered as a gentleman commoner, that being the safest mode of entrance for one with his weak scholarship, and one attractive to him and his parents because he would wear a velvet cap and silk sleeves, incredible as it seems that this should have been, as he says, a "telling consideration," even to the largest importer of sherry and his scriptual wife and heir. His aristocratic mates took his measure and received him very well; and his mother coming down to live in the city, to be near in case he should be ill, he spent his evenings with her, and apparently did not annoy any one with his frequent presence elsewhere. He was fortunate enough, too, to be taken up by Henry Acland, his senior by a year and a half, whose rooms "became to me," he says, "the only place where I was happy. He quietly showed me the manner of life of English youth of good sense, good family, and enlarged education; we both of us already lived in elements far external to the college quadrangle." And he later completes the picture of Acland's manliness, in whom he saw "a noble young English life in its purity, sagacity, honor, reckless daring, and happy piety," by contrasting him with himself in his own less

hardy fiber, and showing at the same time the point of sympathy: "In all this playful and proud heroism of his youth, Henry Acland delighted me as a leopard or a falcon would, without in the least affecting my own character by his example. I had been too often adjured and commanded to take care of myself ever to think of following him over slippery weirs, or accompanying him in pilot-boats through white-topped shoal water; but both in art and science he would pull me on, being years ahead of me, yet glad of my sympathy, for, till I came, he was literally alone in the university in caring for either." Such glimpses of open, honest life on entirely natural and wise terms are not frequent in these pages, but some there are, and they help the interest. There is a considerable proportion, too, of Turnerian rhetoric about the Alps and Italy, of which the novelty has passed away and only the diffuseness remains; and there is something of interest in the history of Ruskin's artistic taste through Prout, rejecting Raphael by the way, to the Campo Santo and the Santa Maria Novella, but this record is already written in his earlier books

CARLYLE AND HIS FRIENDS

I

IN Carlyle's "Reminiscences" are etched the lineaments of many persons, obscure or notable, particularly of the author's relatives, and of Irving, Jeffrey, Southey, and Wordsworth. Occasionally, as comment on these sketches, sparse literary criticism is furnished, and at intervals a random flash or two of the old fire flares out; but the volume has most interest as a fragmentary autobiography, and most value in furthering our acquaintance with Carlyle. It is an old man who is talking, depressed with calamity (the moaning *ay de mi!* too constant, too painful), garrulous, but with the secure and confiding garrulity of long fireside converse. The cumbersome detail, however, is not useless, especially that concerning his diversely branching genealogy; it is no new thing to indicate the debt of his genius to a Scotch extraction, but this avuncular anecdote marks out the obligation sharply, and registers him as born in the savage and brawling border-land, lately reclaimed to civility and orderliness — his father, as he writes, "of the second race of religious men in Annandale." But his father did more than transmit to him a hardy strain of blood: special traits in the taciturn, fearless, toiling, half-loved, half-feared, farmer-mason — his gift of lively, picturesque portraiture, his intensity of isolated emotion, his somber veneration — are recognizably the son's in-

heritance; and spiritual fraternity shines unmistakably in this, which was one of his last sayings to his still obscure, though man-grown child: "Man, it's surely a pity that thou shouldst sit yonder with nothing but the eye of Omniscience to see thee, and thou with such a gift to speak!" A noble type of peasanthood, worth recording in this loving sketch of him.

The ineffaceable impression left by these records as a whole is of the habitual solitude in which Carlyle dwelt, and of the fierceness, almost ferocity, of the struggle that went on in it. Not merely in youth — "life tinted with hues of imprisonment and impossibility, hope practically not there, only obstinacy and a grim steadfastness to strive without hope as with"; not merely in the apprenticeship time — "nightly working at the thing [Schiller] in a serious, sad, and totally solitary way"; but throughout active life at least, the delirious depression of spirit and intensity of effort, from which youthful genius, uncertain of its own faculty and of the world's opportunity, is seldom relieved, haunted him. He seized upon his work with a tenacity well-nigh savage, and his work held him like a spell of evil. During the French Revolution period, for example, he describes himself as taking his daily afternoon walk, "always heavy laden, grim of mood, sometimes with a feeling (not rebellious or impious toward God Most High), but otherwise too similar to Satan's stepping the burning marl. Once or twice, among the flood of equipages at Hyde Park corner, I recollect sternly thinking, 'Yes; and perhaps none of you could do what I am at.' But generally my feeling was, 'I shall finish this book, throw it at your feet, buy a rifle and spade, and withdraw to the transatlantic wilderness, far from human beggaries and basenesses.'" For

three years "that grim book" held him "in a fever blaze"; at the end he stood leaning against a mile-stone, with his face toward Annan, whither he had gone to soothe his "wild excitation of nerves," his purpose to write the book, though he should die, accomplished. "Words cannot utter the wild and ghastly expressiveness of that scene to me; it seemed as if Hades itself and the gloomy realms of death and eternity were looking out on me through those poor old familiar objects."

The thirteen years of "Friedrich" were not different "a desperate dead-lift pull all that time, my whole strength devoted to it; alone, withdrawn from all the world, and desperate of ever getting through (not to speak of 'succeeding' ; left solitary 'with the nightmares' (as I sometimes expressed it); 'hugging unclean creatures' (Prussian blockheadism) 'to my bosom, trying to caress and flatter their secret out of them!'" In such a fashion, with no repose in the idea, no ease in the utterance, he struggled on alone, except for the constant attendance of "the desperate hope," until he got some response to his questionings; not winning it by any gracious Prospero serenity, but rather extorting the secret by putting his own life upon the rack.

The answer, however, was sufficient for himself, and has proved helpful to others. The ideal of conduct and formula of excellence he reached made him indifferent to the world's verdict upon his life or his works. If the world judged not by his standards, its judgments were hollow. At first he had not been so wholly careless; but the "conscript fathers" of literature were silent. From the six copies of "poor Sartor" sent to six Edinburgh literary friends he got "no smallest whisper, even of receipt — a thing which," he grimly adds, " has silently

and insensibly led me never since to send any copy of a book to Edinburgh, or, indeed, to Scotland at all, except in unliterary cases." He was thus forced to a self-reliance not difficult for his nature; and so, when Thackeray praised him in the "Times," "one other poor judge voting," he thought, "but what is he or such as he?" The only true criticism for him, respecting that French Revolution specter-drama, was his own to his wife: "What they will do with this book none knows, my Jeannie, lass; but they have not had for a two hundred years any book that came more truly from a man's very heart, and so let them trample it under foot and hoof as they see best!" His final feeling towards his works and their value to the world is shown by this remark on the "Friedrich": "It has now become κόπρος to me, insignificant as the dung of a thousand centuries ago. I did get through, thank God! Let it now wander into the belly of oblivion forever!"

The world's standards were not for him; nevertheless, his standards were for all the world. His equanimity in applying them would resemble that of the careless gods, were his humor not so undeniably atrabiliar, in consequence of which a greater number of fools, bores, and blockheads are here set down by name than would have been found in one of his own little German courts. This pinning of flies in a posthumous work, with a constant "See! this is a fly!" — why, even the sentimental "Get thee gone, poor devil!" is better stuff. As each nonentity pops into the field of vision and collapses, there comes into the mind "Jeannie's" old grandfather, and how he made each new acquaintance stand up to be measured, inches being infallibly indicative of worth, and one falls to thinking of the futility of all standards that disregard

specific faculty and opportunity even in the humblest. Nor is the mensuration flawless when these tests are applied to the celebrities whom our author knew. To borrow his description of Wordsworth's delineations, these men are seen "only as through the reversed telescope, and reduced to the size of a mouse and its nest, or little more." This, of De Quincey, is one of the best of such pictures: "One of the smallest man figures I ever saw; shaped like a pair of tongs, and hardly above five feet in all. When he sate, you would have taken him, by candle-light, for the beautifullest little child, blue-eyed, sparkling face, had there not been a something, too, which said, '*Eccovi* — this child has been in hell.'" Etched work, as has been observed above; the acid has bitten in; the chief result is an *effect*. Take this of Leigh Hunt, for a pleasanter sort: "Dark complexion, copious, clean, strong, black hair, beautifully shaped head, fine, beaming, serious hazel eyes; seriousness and intellect the main expression of the face. He would lean on his elbow against the mantel-piece (fine, clean, elastic figure, too, he had, five feet ten or more), and look round him nearly in silence before taking leave for the night; 'as if I were a Lar,' said he once, 'or permanent household god here' (such his polite, aerial-like way)." Were all these sketches as admirable, there could be only thankfulness for such naturalness, force, veracity; but when his mind estimates while his eye sees, when he mixes judgment with his drawing — in Coleridge, Mill, Lamb — there is blur and error, ending often lamely and impotently in grotesque results. In singular contrast with this inability of Carlyle to distribute exact justice to men, either nobodies or notorieties, is his appreciation of those nearest to him: his father, whose natural

endowment, he thinks, possibly greater than Robert Burns's, and his wife, who exceeded, it seemed to him, "all the Sands and Eliots and babbling *coterie* of celebrated scribbling women that have strutted over the world in my time, if all boiled down and distilled to essence." In his exceeding solitariness it seemed so; for what with his fever and battle, the sufficiency to him of the solution he gave the sphinx riddle, his trust in his standards of work done and thrusting itself on the senses, life lost to his eye its true relief; all fine and various proportions vanished in exaggerations and diminutions. In what further and worse obscurities he was involved when he passed from the individual to the mass of humanity, in "Latter-Day Pamphlets" and the like, these records show little sign, except for an outbreak about the "beautiful nigger agony" and a quaver over "poor Davis."

He taught us much, but at the end he stood in a tragic isolation from the men in whom the fire of his thought burned most clearly. He denounced their aims, he put their hopes from him; the trend of the new civilization, with its democracies, its philanthropies, its prosperities, was, it seemed to him, downward to the pit, and he sang his Tiresiad to the last. These autobiographic fragments, however, do something to disclose, though darkly, a unity that explains the *dénoûment* of his career. So to speak, his own nature imprisoned him, his own effort obstructed him, his own development dwarfed him. "A haggard existence, that of his," said he to Southey of Shelley. His own existence was grim and gaunt, a wrestling with far other than the angel of the Lord; with dark spirits, indeed, "as of a man [it is his own account] shrouded since youthhood in continual

gloom and grimness, set too nakedly versus the devil and all men." His struggle was heroic, and fruitful of spiritual good to men; however defective in joy, in humanity, in repose, his life now takes its place among the noblest of English men of letters.

II

That one day which Emerson made "look like enchantment," in the poor house of the lonely hill-country where Carlyle was biding his time, may well be reckoned memorable and fortunate in the annals of literature. It knit together, at the beginning of their career, the two men who were to give, each in his own land, the most significant and impressive utterance of spiritual truth in their age. Mutual respect and open sympathy arose in their hearts at first sight, and soon became a loyal and trustful affection, which, endeared by use and wont, proved for almost fifty years one of the best earthly possessions that fell to their lot. Throughout this period, except for a few brief weeks, they lived separate, and hence their correspondence is a nearly complete record of their friendship as it was expressed in words and acts. On our side of the ocean was Emerson, at Concord: freed from pressing care by his competency of twenty thousand dollars; serene in his philosophy of "acquiescence and optimism"; working in his garden or walking by Walden Pond; discovering geniuses among the townspeople; lecturing in the neighborhood, or jotting down essays for his readers — "men and women of some religious culture and aspirations, young or else mystical." On the other side was Carlyle, "the poorest

man in London"; hag-ridden by spirits of revolt and despair; wrestling with his books as with the demon, "in desperate hope"; finding the face of nature spectral, and the face of man tragically burlesque; saying to himself, "Surely, if ever man had a finger-of-Providence shown him, thou hast it; literature will neither yield the bread nor a stomach to digest bread with; quit it in God's name — shouldst thou take spade and mattock instead"; yet heartening himself with his mother's words, "They cannot take God's providence from thee." The letters of these two friends, so sharply contrasted by circumstances and nature, must be, one thinks, of extraordinary interest, and possibly some wonder may spring up at finding the talk in them about every-day matters — family, work, business, friends, and the like; but the special charm of the correspondence lies in this fact, in its being human rather than literary, in its naturalness of speech, man to man, whether the theme, in Emerson's phrase, "savor of eternity," or concern the proper mode of cooking Indian meal.

There is much about "a New England book," as Carlyle, putting Old England to the blush, called it — "Sartor Resartus" — and of its welcome to Cape Cod and Boston Bay, which made Fraser "shriek." We are proud of that; and now we can be glad to know of the money that went to Carlyle from us for this and other books, when he needed money, and can feel a sympathetic indignation against the "gibbetless thief," whose piracies troubled Emerson in his good work, even though we get a cheap satisfaction in knowing that a "brother corsair" in England did the like when Carlyle tried to reciprocate his friend's good offices. There is much, too, about Carlyle's coming to America to lecture: details of probable

costs and profits; assurances that, advertised as "the personal friend of Goethe," he would, merely "for the name's sake," be "certain of success for one winter, but not afterwards"; congratulations that "Dr. Channing reads and respects you, a fact of importance"; probabilities of "the cordial opposition" of the university. (Ah, poor Harvard! But what can be expected from a son of thine who writes, "The educated class are of course less fair-minded than others"?) Nothing came of all this, though Carlyle did not yield his wish to visit us until he was an old man. Glimpses of humorous sights and things are given from the first: of Dr. Furness, "feeding Miss Martineau with the 'Sartor';" of "Alcott's English Tail of bottomless imbeciles" in London; of Brook Farm days — "not a reading man but has a draft of a new Community in his waistcoat pocket"; of Carlyle himself (a sight, one would think, to stir Rabelaisian laughter) at a water-cure — "wet wrappages, solitary sad *steepages*, and other singular procedures." Now and then, too, they praise each other, as friends should. Thus Carlyle, on reading the Phi Beta Kappa oration, breaks out, "I could have wept to read that speech; the clear high melody of it went tingling through my heart. I said to my wife, 'There, woman!'" But they praise with reservations, as befitted their independence and differences. Carlyle is shy of his friend's genius as of a possible will-o'-the-wisp (beautiful, but leading whither?), and Emerson looks askance at the Harlequinries of his "Teufelsdröckh." They confide their bereavements to each other, simply, manfully: now it is Emerson's little boy, "the bud of God," who is gone; and so on it is Carlyle's tenderly loved mother, and at last the wife. They send their friends to each other — Emerson, of course, by far

the larger number — and they talk them over. In these criticisms and characterizations is the principal literary interest of the collection. Most of them are by Carlyle, and they exhibit the same power as similar passages of his “Reminiscences,” but more wisely used.

Here is Alcott, whom Emerson had sent on “with his more than a prophet’s egotism, a great man if he cannot write well”; whom Carlyle found “a genial, innocent, simple-hearted man, of much natural intelligence and goodness, with an air of rusticity, veracity, and dignity — the good Alcott, with his long, lean face and figure, with his gray-worn temples and mild, radiant eyes, all bent on saving the world by a return to acorns and the golden age; . . . let him love me as he can, and live on vegetables in peace, and I living *partly* on vegetables will continue to love him!” Margaret Fuller, Emerson describes as “without beauty or genius,” — “with a certain wealth and generosity of nature.” Carlyle had larger language for her: “Such a predetermination to *eat* this big Universe as her oyster or her egg, and to be absolute empress of all height and glory in it that her heart could conceive, I have not before seen in any human soul. Her ‘mountain-*me*,’ indeed! — but her courage, too, is high and clear, her chivalrous nobleness indeed is great, her veracity in its deepest sense *à toute épreuve*.” In briefer strokes, Miss Martineau, “swathed like a mummy into Socinian and Political-Economy formulas, and yet verily alive in the inside of that”; the “pretty little robin-red-breast of a man,” Lord Houghton; Dr. Hedge — “a face like a rock; a voice like a howitzer”; Southey — “the shovel-hat is grown to him”; Macready, who “puts to shame our Bishops and Archbishops.” The list is a long one, and it is pleasing to

notice that Carlyle recognizes and appreciates good qualities in those of whom he writes. Two more of these portraits cannot be spared. Of Webster he writes, "As a Logic-fencer, Advocate, or Parliamentary Hercules, one would incline to back him at first sight against all the extant world. The tanned complexion, that amorphous, crag-like face, the dull black eyes under their precipice of brows, like dull anthracite furnaces, needing only to be *blown*, the mastiff-mouth accurately closed — I have not traced so much of *silent Berserkir rage* that I remember of in any other man." Finally, of Tennyson, before he was taken up "in the top of the wave," — "Alfred is one of the few British or Foreign Figures who are and remain beautiful to me; a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother! . . . a man solitary and sad as certain men are, dwelling in an element of gloom. . . . One of the finest-looking men in the world; a great shock of rough, dusty-dark hair; bright-laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of swallow-brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical metallic — fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous. I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe." Elsewhere, with the Carlyle touch, "He wants a *task*!"

Year by year these letters go, and "the cleft of difference" grows wider between the two: Carlyle glowing more intense with the heat of a dark realism; Emerson becoming more ethereal in his ideality. Their mutual recognition is as generous as ever, but each wishes the other different. Carlyle calls for "some *concretion* of

these beautiful *abstracta*." "I love your 'Dial,'" he writes, "and yet it is with a kind of shudder. You seem to me in danger of dividing yourselves from the Fact of this present Universe, and soaring away after Ideas, Beliefs, Revelations, and such like — into perilous altitudes beyond the curve of perpetual frost. . . . I do believe, for one thing, a man has no right to say to his own generation, turning quite away from it, 'Be damned!' It is the whole Past and the whole Future, this same cotton-spinning, dollar-hunting, canting and shrieking, very wretched generation of ours. Come back into it, I tell you." Again and again he repeats his warning, and calls, "Come down and help us." Emerson, on his side, speaks his own discontent with "that spendthrift style of yours," those "sky-vaultings," and the like, but easily tolerates his friend's peculiarities, and at last takes him as "a highly virtuous gentleman who swears"; while to the summons to leave the mountain-tops, and "come down," he replies, "I don't know what you mean." The genius of each dominated him, and the world has not lost thereby. In the style of the one there was the aroma of Babylon, and in that of the other something of the day-dawn, as they said in their genuine compliments; but the two men could coalesce as little as would the two metaphors. They advanced in age, and the letters grew more infrequent: the fault was Emerson's. It is pitiful to read Carlyle's appeals against his friend's silence, the silence of that voice which was to him, he says over and over, the only human voice he ever heard in response to his own soul. He was wandering about his native country with that "fatal talent of converting all nature into Preternaturalism," or standing in Luther's room in the Wartburg — "I believe I actually had tears in my

eyes there, and *kissed* the old oak table"; or he was struggling with "Friedrich," and ever repeating, "I am lonely — I am lonely." At the end of a long, impassioned protest (and the passion is next to tears) against the misapprehension of the phrase of "the eighteen million fools," he first makes his prayer, "O my Friend, have tolerance for me, have sympathy with me!" Again, as early as 1852, he writes, "My manifold sins against you, involuntary all of them, I may well say, are often enough present to my sad thoughts; and a kind of remorse is mixed with the other sorrow — as if I could have helped growing to be, by aid of time and destiny, the grim Ishmaelite I am, and so shocking your serenity by my ferocities! I admit you were like an angel to me, and absorbed in the beautifulest manner all thunderclouds into the depths of your immeasurable ether; and it is indubitable I love you very well, and have long done, and mean to do. And on the whole you will have to rally yourself into some kind of correspondence with me again. To me, at any rate, it is a great want, and adds perceptibly to the sternness of these years; deep as is my dissent from your Gymnosophist view of Heaven and Earth, I find an agreement that swallows up all conceivable dissents." But the letters remained long unanswered upon Emerson's table, in spite of this and other like appeals; he had forgotten his early words, "Please God, I will never again sit six weeks of this short human life over a letter of yours without answering it." When he does write he assures him of "the old love with the old limitations," counts it his "eminent happiness to have been your friend" and discoverer, and may well say, "There is no example of constancy like yours." The fact remains: Emerson appreciated love as the com-

radeship of noble minds; but of the love that clings and yearns, and seeks only repose in the friend, he knew not. Every syllable he ever wrote of love or friendship is thought, not passion. Carlyle had the peasant's heart, the heart of a simple man; learning had not dried it, nor flattery hardened it, nor the charities of a fortunate life lulled it. He knew Emerson's fidelity; what he wanted was not the knowledge, but the sense of love. He was not to have it in the fullness he desired: he grew older and more lonely, and the letters fewer, until they ceased, ten years before the death of the friends, in the business necessary for the conveyance of Carlyle's bequest of books to Harvard College, in which he took great pleasure, as in "something itself connected with THE SPRING in a higher sense — a little white and red lipped bit of Daisy, pure and poor, scattered into TIME'S Seed-field." Here it seems fit to notice, once for all, the deep interest and friendliness of Carlyle toward America, as it is shown throughout these letters. To quote but one or two phrases, America is at the beginning "the other parish" — "the Door of Hope to distracted Europe." Of the subduing of the Western prairies he exclaims, "There is no myth of Athene or Herakles equal to that fact." Finally, at the close of all, he confesses, "I privately whisper to myself, 'Could any Friedrich Wilhelm, now, or Friedrich, or most perfect Governor you could hope to realize, guide forward what is America's essential task at present faster or more completely than "anarchic America" herself is now doing?' *Such* "Anarchy" has a great deal to say for itself (would to Heaven ours of England had as much!), and points toward grand *anti*-Anarchies in the future; . . . I hope, with the aid of centuries, immense things from

it, in my private mind." Burke's famous admission, in his "Reflections on the French Revolution," that he might be wrong, after all, was not more creditable to his large wisdom than is this to Carlyle's deep sincerity.

The reputation of Carlyle has materially gained by this "Correspondence," while Emerson remains the man we have always known. As in the "Reminiscences," we see again the grimness, the frightful intensity, the solitude, of Carlyle's life. It is marvelous to notice how exactly Carlyle's account of his states of feeling, written from memory, agrees with the contemporary record of the letters. But beyond what was told us before, we possess now clearer proofs of his sympathy and tenderness; his heart is laid bare, and we, being freed from the prejudices stirred by the praise or blame that came from it in particular cases, can better appreciate his humanity. His genius was of that kind which makes misapprehension and hatred easy; this volume helps to show us the man as he truly was, one of the noblest of men.

III

The Goethe-Carlyle Correspondence has the character of a literary episode. It presents several aspects, all of them simple. The sight of Carlyle himself in an attitude of ordinary human respect toward a mortal creature still in the flesh is in itself a pleasing spectacle; and he is here to be observed in the postures of practical hero-worship. To Goethe, the writer, Carlyle believed himself to be under great obligation for light upon the universal mystery, and for counsel in the conduct of life; and to Goethe, the man, he accordingly expressed his

fervent gratitude, as bright youths in similar circumstances are so often tempted of the devil to do, by inditing a letter to the ruling genius of the hour under whose intellectual sway he happened to be born. In this case the usual unfortunate disillusion did not follow: the "spiritual father" showed himself truly paternal, smiled benignity upon the plans, fortunes, and various activities of the young man; and the "grateful son," in his turn, sent his tribute of translations, eulogistic critiques, and epistolary compliments to the sage at Weimar. The influence of Goethe certainly was the most powerful external stimulus in the literary life of Carlyle, and the friendly recognition which the latter received from the great man, while still obscure and unsuccessful, was no doubt a comfort, and perhaps a support; the gratitude of Carlyle was sincere, and his service to the fame of his master was considerable. But the relationship established by the Correspondence was personal, not intellectual; if one opens this volume with any expectation of finding wisdom in it, he will come to grief; that side of the connection must be sought in the works of the two authors. In these letters, they express their individuality, not their genius; they are, on page after page, men leading an every-day life.

To the fashion of our times there seems to be something peculiar in the general tone of these letters, which is not altogether explained by reminding ourselves that of the two persons engaged one was old, the other young; one the oracular voice, the other an acolyte; one the shining great original, the other a Scotch translator. These differences do not account for what appears to be a lack of naturalness, or at least of that openness which is the charm of familiar literary correspondence. This

Correspondence is very literary, but more formal than familiar: the principal figure in it is the monarch of literary Europe, who is also a court chamberlain; and both the participants are aware of the value of ceremony in adjusting human relations. The consequence is, to be frank, that Goethe is undeniably heavy in his communications, and Carlyle is preternaturally solemn, even for a young Scotchman of his severe ilk. Goethe's heaviness is unquestionably natural; but, quite as plainly, Carlyle is minding his manners. One rubs his eyes, and asks if this is the Carlyle we know. How much he was warped from his native bent it is easy to observe by the contrast of the few contemporary letters to personal friends which interleave the main Correspondence. In them he speaks out like a man; but in reading the others, and especially the earlier of them, one is reminded of nothing so often as of the dedicatory epistles to that by-gone worthy, over whose disestablishment by Johnson Carlyle rejoiced — the Patron. As to the documentary missives that came from Weimar, Carlyle himself kept up a silent thinking. What does he say confidentially to brother John, now on his travels, and possibly to be in the actual presence of the great man?

“To a certainty you must come round by Weimar, as you return, and see this world's wonder, and tell us on your sincerity what manner of man he is, for daily he grows more inexplicable to me. One letter is written like an oracle, the next shall be too redolent of twaddle. How is it that the author of “Faust” and “Meister” can *tryste* himself with such characters as ‘Herr ——’ (the simplest and stupidest man of his day, a Westmoreland Gerundgrinder and *cleishbotham*) and ‘Captain ——’ (a little wizened, cleanly man, most musical, most melan-

choly)? . . . For myself, unshaken in my former belief, though Jane rather wavers," etc.

"Twaddle"! But whether it was the curious testimonial of Carlyle's fitness to be a Scotch professor, which he had just received, and which is the most Shandean document of the kind within our knowledge, or whether it was the gracious welcome given to the Herr and Captain blanked in such unmistakable Carlylese, that drew forth this improper expression, does not appear. One concludes that it was as well that "the pair," as the Carlyles, man and wife, are usually designated in these pages, did not make their wished-for journey to Weimar. It was much better to exchange books and trinkets, and live at the ends of the earth.

Yet what has been said above is only a part of the story, and the least agreeable part. From another point of view, this memorial of the acquaintance of these two illustrious men is more attractive. It is without intellectual value, not unnaturally; these two men have expressed themselves so fully in their books that nothing fresh or striking in the way of thought could be anticipated; but as an exhibition of kindness and good-will on Goethe's part, and of reverence and disciple-ship on Carlyle's, the Correspondence has a human interest, and it serves also as a landmark in English literary history. To Goethe, Carlyle was only a translator and student of German literature, engaged in the active propagandism of the fame and name of himself and his compatriots. He praised him, indeed, in general terms, and predicted a future for him; but there is no intimation that he saw any original genius in him except what could be usefully employed in continuing the business of translating his own works and writing manuals of German literature;

and the tone and matter of Eckermann's letters indicate that this was in fact all that the name of Carlyle meant at Weimar.

At that time Carlyle had given no sign of being capable of work other than critical review, of a longer or shorter kind. He was then the principal channel by which German literature was being communicated to the English people, and it was this circumstance, practically, that made Goethe his correspondent. The latter's heart was in the work of extending German ideas into other languages, and promoting a general intellectual commerce among civilized nations, and he found in Carlyle a ready and able assistant; and inasmuch as all that was being done in England then in disseminating German thought was a matter of interest to Goethe, it happens that this Correspondence represents fairly well the historic moment when the later literary influence of Germany began to be effective on English soil. This interest of the letters is merely incidental and for scholars; but it helps us to understand the facts of Carlyle's relation to Goethe, which really sprang out of his usefulness as a hack-writer on the magazines and as a translator. We do not have here the communion of two equal friends, as in the letters between Carlyle and Emerson, or of two original minds actively giving or receiving influence; there is nothing of this, but only compliments, attentions, and talk incidental to the German propaganda.

This being understood, it is altogether delightful to observe in what kindly and intimate ways Goethe varied and enriched the slight connection between himself and his practically unknown admirer, how thoughtful he was, what true and natural good-feeling he showed, until the acquaintance did really ripen into a warm

mutual friendliness. This is the charming thing in view of which one forgets that Goethe was anything more than a pleasant and polite old gentleman, much engaged in the little affairs of age, and sorry that his head could no longer furnish a lock of hair for that one of "the worthy wedded pair" who had sent him a lock from her own; and forgets, too, that Carlyle, although still undistinguished, was by no means a youth when he was writing the most decorous compositions he ever penned. One enters into the spirit of it, and enjoys the self-complacent, kind-mannered old poet and the meek and not altogether unsuspecting Scotchman; for in no other place does Carlyle appear so unmitigably Scotch as in this book.

IV

Of the good and evil of modern biography the memorials of Carlyle will be a severe test. Slowly he won his way merely by literature to a place where he had the respect of the world, the veneration of the most earnest of the younger generation, and power over all the best. He died; and the interest of his work, which had been as real as Alexander's, as laborious as Frederick's, as believing as Cromwell's, has been superseded by the interest of his life. This is temporary, of course, but the intimate knowledge that men possess in regard to his own human nature will profoundly modify the meaning of his books to them and in the long run this change for better or worse will prove the significant thing. He himself taught that character is the best light by which to get an understanding of a man's work, and his biographer has proved faithful to that theory. He himself author-

ized the violation of his own thoughts, affections, and wrongdoing, in their secretest privacy. It is true that he did it in that mood of sorrow and repentance which is peculiarly liable to error of judgment, when a wise friend is a friend indeed; but he did it. The seal that protected his married life being once broken, other seals easily gave way. There can be no question that Carlyle's literary influence has seriously suffered in consequence; and, though our annals have been enriched by the story of a life of the highest moral interest, it is quite possible that the sacrifice has been too great. There have been men whose nature so outvalued their work that biography, while revealing their feeblenesses, has honored them; there has been character so fine that its illustration in the acts of daily life is a possession much more precious than any other record of it originally meant for the public: but Carlyle's nature and character, taken in the whole, were not such. His virtues were completely expressed in his works, and for the most part his biography has been a lengthening history of the miserable effects of his faults upon his own and others' lives. Could he have characterized himself with the same narrowness of heart and intellectual contempt that he exhibited toward some men whom he knew, these memorials would have furnished him matter for a more biting and a more unjust description than any he has been guilty of. What the features of it would be there is no need to outline. That he was genuine, sincere, truthful, no one will doubt; but all will remember that the same qualities in that "poor fool" of a Gladstone, in whom Carlyle thought all the cants of the age had become convictions, are as worthy respect. He was strenuously righteous; but so was Mill, in whom that virtue did not

count for salvation in his eyes. So one might continue, were it useful to argue to the point that Carlyle did not monopolize the manliness of England. It is not strange that Froude lays stress unduly on his friend's good traits, but it cannot be disguised that there is much need for the exercise of charity by the reader; and the proof of this is that the story touches the heart far more than it illumines, or exalts, or strengthens the spirit.

In this narrative of the years of Carlyle's mature life in London, one point is touched on that has never been comprehensively treated, and that is his relation to the public questions of his own time. Froude tries to make much of it, but he succeeds only in keeping up an obscure feeling that the subject is there. Every one knows what Carlyle thought, and there is a taking plausibility in the analogy Froude finds between him and the Hebrew prophets who rebuked, denounced, and exhorted the tribes that forgot God; but the likeness would hold as well in the case of any vehement reformer who had not the power of the sword. He prophesied destruction; and as the history of civilized man has been a series of catastrophes it is quite possible that his prophecy is true. At each new break in the old order men hope that the kingdom of God is near at hand, and we who are building on liberty, the diffusion of intelligence among all the people, and philanthropy, indulge the old belief, perhaps to no better purpose than did the men who converted the nations, who brought back antiquity, and who freed the conscience of Europe. We are engaged in a great effort of equal dignity, and Carlyle declared against us, set himself in opposition to the irresistible movement of civilization, and denounced upon us "God's Revenge." So once had Savonarola done with equal sincerity, and perhaps the issue will in the end be the same

to the moderns as it was to the Florentines. But in this matter Carlyle exceeded the rôle of the prophet; he not only preached that no moral regeneration could come from the new expedients of politics, in a large sense, for the administration of society, but he added that such measures were foolish in their own worldly sphere. In the first part of his message he was right — he said what every prophet declares is God's word; but in the second it ought now to be the devout hope of all men that he may prove a babbler. Certainly, in this province of his thought — in his sneers at the humane efforts of his contemporaries to give manhood to all who wear the form of man, to show even in prisons some kindness on the part of organized society toward the criminal and vicious, to insist in practical affairs that no man can be saved except by the exercise of powers that involve such freedom of thought, motive, and action as may also possibly result in his own damnation — in all this he ran counter to the spirit of Christianity. His temper did belong in many respects to the Old Dispensation, to the rigor and bigotry of Scotch Presbyterianism, to the countryman of Knox. He was so careful that things should be done decently, that acts should be right, as to make it seem that his corner-stone was a belief in government. He had a higher regard for authority than liberty, for compulsion than persuasion, for the law than the victim; but of the aims and methods, the aspirations and energies, of the Christ's kingdom that cometh not by force he seems to have known little. He never was so profound a spiritualist as to make statecraft, as Plato did, a department of man's education: to him all that was "niggerism." Carlyle's convictions regarding suffrage, emancipation, prison-reform, parliamentary gov-

ernment, and the like topics on which he was accustomed to emit "geyser-spouts," as they are termed, were closely connected with his more general views of the moral order of the universe, the sources of greatness in men and nations, and the lessons of history as he read them; and to follow out these threads of union would be very helpful toward an explanation of his reactionary thought. Froude has not done this; he plainly respects Carlyle as a political seer as well as in his capacity of "Hebrew prophet," but he brings nothing to support his master except a Toryish sentiment. We may fail in our effort for the self-education of the race by devolving upon men opportunities they may abuse and responsibilities they may violate, and there are elements enough of danger in our legacy from old times as well as of our own making; but had Carlyle been our leader in the "Exodus from Houndsditch," he would have taken us back, very surely, to the bondage of an Israelitish code, if not to the shadow of Egypt itself.

In the last forty years of Carlyle's London career there is fresh illustration of his character, but no new traits appear. The impression which is most strengthened is that of the strange mingling of the rudeness of his original nature with the fineness of the high-bred civilization into which he grew. The strength of his peasant ancestry was at the core of his virtue; but as he developed, and appropriated from others, many modifications are noticeable: for one thing, he became tender. One believes he was always essentially kind; but, as in uncultivated men, his kindness had to be appealed to in order to become active; it was not the habit of his daily life. It is as if the softening and enriching processes, that usually require the period of two or three generations

to import into character the fine results of civilization, had been crowded into a single existence. This is one reason, perhaps, why the last years of his life seem morally more beautiful, as if time had done its perfect work for him. The trait which shows most plainly his peasant extraction and which clung longest to him was his peculiar appreciation of the charm of civility as he saw it in great houses. It is the more significant because he seldom gives it verbal form; he may not have known quite clearly his own feeling. It may seem a strange, an inconsistent matter; but there can be no rational doubt that Carlyle liked to be lionized, and was willing to pay the price of physical misery for a dinner with great people. It was not the worst of faults. He would, nevertheless, probably have resented Froude's description of him as one of Lord Ashburton's train; and so far as his consciousness went the remark must be regarded as unjust, though the fact may have been as stated. However that was, he paid dearly for the episode of his friendship with that excellent nobleman. In other matters, too, especially in the ferocity of his judgments, one hears the North Briton accent. But after all, the story of this life now finished is a very noble one; it attaches men's hearts to a degree that is marvelous when one remembers how much there is in it which repels. Carlyle's life, for better or worse, is now a part of his works.

V

Unconscious autobiography is interesting, but it is seldom fair and adequate. In "The Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle," one reads plainly the petty

and mean details of a thirty years' housekeeping; but it is only inferentially that one gains an impression of the charm that, before Mrs. Carlyle's marriage, surrounded her with lovers, and, after it, made her the prized friend of men of intellect, and the refuge of all mad and miserable people, and won for her, when she grew old, the enthusiastic affection of her associates of all ages and all degrees of talent or stupidity. She has fared ill in having her familiar letters given to the world just as they were written, in the raw, with all their feminine confidences, which an editor with a touch of the old-fashioned chivalrous feeling for women would have suppressed, with their hasty account of her domestic vexations of body and mind, their revelation of her little necessary social hypocrisies, and even the heart-burnings that she intrusted only to her diary. Her husband, it is true, prepared the letters for publication; he was led to do so by a wish to honor her, and also by a feeling of remorse and a desire to do penance for his ill-treatment; but he left the decision in the matter to Froude, on whom the responsibility lies. It is useless to lament the indiscretion and obtuseness of this editor; the hero has found his valet, and the preacher of silence is to have as many words made about him and his as possible; it is only left to the public to be thankful that the house, which is now lighted up and thrown open from kitchen to bedroom, had no worse secrets for disclosure.

The letters, being written by an unsuspecting woman who was unusually genuine, frank, original, audacious in word and act, and unconventional to a fault, and being, moreover, seasoned with entertaining literary and social gossip, are, of course, full of interest. Vivacity is the

marked trait of the writer; but the continual reference to her happy girlhood and its scenes, growing more pathetic year after year, and the continual lament of Carlyle in his notes — like a Greek chorus, giving a kind of artistic unity to the series — lend an effect of sadness to the whole. The life of the heroine — she deserves the name — was impressive; amid the ignoble trivialities that fell to her daily lot, she kept to the high purposes involved in them with great courage and self-control, and with unremitting devotion. An only child, reared in a wealthy and refined home, the favorite of all who knew her, with many rich and intelligent suitors about her, she had chosen to wed the poor and obscure man in whose genius she alone believed, and, against the advice of her friends, had married him, and gone to the lonely Scotch farm to be practically his household servant; there she had spent six toilsome years, and now they had come to London, to the house that was to be her home until death. These letters cover this latter period, of the household affairs of which they contain a complete account. Her work was less menial, since they kept a servant, so that she no longer had to mop up her own floors; but the tasks set her were difficult and exhausting. To provide meals that Carlyle could eat without too violent storming — for, as she said in Mazzini's phrase, Carlyle "loved silence somewhat platonically"; to shield him from the annoyances of visitors and bad servants; to rid the neighborhood, by ingenious diplomacy, of the nuisances of ever-reappearing parrots, dogs, cocks, and the like enemies of sleep and meditation, her own as well as his; to buy his clothes, see lawyers and agents, even to protest against his high taxes before the commissioners, and, in all possible ways, to

save his money at the expense of her own tastes and even of her health; to attend to refittings of the house by carpenters, painters, and masons, while he was away on his summer vacations; in brief, to spare him all the ills of the outer world, to make the conditions of his work favorable, and himself as comfortable as it was possible for a morose dyspeptic to be, and at the same time to prevent his seeing how much trouble and anxiety it cost her—such was the duty prescribed to herself and done faithfully for years without complaint, amid illnesses not light nor few, which were “not without their good uses,” she wrote, because she arose from them “with new heart for the battle of existence—what a woman means by new heart, not new brute force, as you men understand it, but new power of loving and enduring.” In this effective practical life she tried to repress some portion of her womanly nature, for she agreed, verbally at least, with Carlyle’s disapproval of “moods,” “feelings,” “sentiments,” and similar phases of emotion not resulting in work done; but her nature, being pathetically susceptible to these forbidden experiences, often overruled her philosophy, and brought the knowledge of her solitude home to her; for she had no direct share in her husband’s work, no marks of tenderness from him, and few words or deeds in recognition of her sacrifices for him. She succeeded only too well in blinding him to her own pain, which was, indeed, the easiest of her tasks. Her words on Carlyle’s sending her a birthday present just after her mother’s death are significant of much that is unsaid, and contain the explanation she gave to herself of his earlier neglect. “I cannot tell you,” she writes, “how *wae* his little gift made me, as well as glad; it was the first thing of the kind he ever

gave to me in his life. In great matters he is always kind and considerate; but these little attentions, which we women attach so much importance to, he was never in the habit of rendering to any one; his up-bringing and the severe turn of mind he has from nature had alike indisposed him toward them. And now the desire to replace to me the irreplaceable makes him as good in little things as he used to be in great." This was in the sixteenth year after marriage.

There was a limit, however, to Mrs. Carlyle's power of self-sacrifice. Her proud, spirited, sensitive nature was ever reasserting itself, persistently refusing to be lost in her husband's individuality. She thirsted both for expressed recognition and for expressed affection. In an early letter to Sterling she writes thus: "In spite of the honestest efforts to annihilate my I-ety or merge it in what the world doubtless considers my better half, I still find myself a self-subsisting and, alas! self-seeking me. Little Felix in the 'Wanderjahre,' when, in the midst of an animated scene between Wilhelm and Theresa, he pulls Theresa's gown and calls out, 'Mama Theresa, I, too, am here!' only speaks out with the charming trustfulness of a little child what I am perpetually feeling, though too sophisticated to pull people's skirts, or exclaim, in so many words, 'Mr. Sterling, I, too, am here!'" The recognition which she desired was abundantly given by the men who gathered about Carlyle, many of whom were more attached to her than to him; and the despised "feelings" found an outlet in brightening various miserable lives, poor exiles of all nations, unfortunate maidens, lost children, and, in general, all people in affliction, who were attracted to her, she said, as straw to amber. Notwithstanding the affection and de-

votion of her many friends, she seems to have remained lonely at heart; but she kept on with the old routine, while the "French Revolution" and "Cromwell" were being written, and she found comfort, if not contentment, in the sense of fulfilled duty and the knowledge that she had materially helped her husband in her silent way. The whisper of fame grew loud, the doors of the great flew open; but when her faith in Carlyle's genius was at last justified and her hopes for him realized, something happened that had not entered into her calculations. Carlyle was finding the sweetest reward in the society of another woman. This was the first Lady Ashburton, who was "the cleverest woman out of sight" that Mrs. Carlyle ever saw, and at whose home, a center of intellectual society, both she and her husband often visited; but it seems that in London the wives of men of genius, like the wives of bishops, do not take the social rank of their husbands; so Froude assures us, and Lady Ashburton made the fact plain to Mrs. Carlyle. The result was, that, toward the close of a ten years' acquaintance, the latter grew so jealous of the former's fascination as to make herself very wretched. Miss Geraldine Jewsbury, her most intimate friend, explains the affair in a very sensible note. She says that any other wife would have laughed at Carlyle's bewitchment, but this one, seeing Lady Ashburton admired for sayings and doings for which she was snubbed, and contrasting the former's *grande-dame* manners with her own lonely endeavors to help her husband and serve him through years of hardship, became more abidingly and intensely miserable than words can utter; her inmost life was solitary, without tenderness, caresses, or loving words from him, and she felt that her love and life were laid waste.

All this she willingly endured while he neglected her for his work; but when this excuse could no longer be made for him, the strain told on her, and, without faltering from her purpose of helping and shielding him, she became warped. Such is Miss Jewsbury's account, nearly in her own words. There is no need to apportion the blame between the pair. The fact is that Mrs. Carlyle suffered, and that, for some time after she became aware of her own real feeling, her letters are less confidently affectionate in regard to her husband, and contain more or less open discontent of a very justifiable kind. After Lady Ashburton's death, she writes to him as follows: "I have neither the strength and spirits to bear up against your discontent, nor the obtuseness to be indifferent to it. You have not the least notion what a killing thought it is to have put into one's heart, gnawing there day and night, that one ought to be dead, since one can no longer make the same exertions as formerly"; and there is more to the same effect, to which Carlyle affixes his note, "Alas! alas! sinner that I am!" Notwithstanding such plain words, which are indeed infrequent, Mrs. Carlyle still guarded her husband, standing between him and the objects of his wrath, "imitating, in a small, humble way, the Roman soldier who gathered his arms full of the enemy's spears, and received them all into his own breast," on which sentence Carlyle again comments, "Oh heavens, the comparison! it was too true." As time went on they drew together more closely. The second Lady Ashburton appeared, who became very dear to Mrs. Carlyle, and was even advised by her to "send a kiss" to the now aging philosopher. Carlyle himself understood better his wife's moods and needs, though still imperfectly, and he was more kind in word and more thought-

ful in act than of old. Thus, at last, the letters conclude as pleasantly as they began, with Mrs. Carlyle's elation over the Edinburgh triumph, from which her husband returned to find her dead.

On the whole, in spite of appearances, the married life here laid bare was not an exceptionally unhappy one; nor does it seem that Carlyle's neglect of his wife sprang from any moral fault, but merely from his native insensibility, his absorption in his work, and that unconscious selfishness which is ordinarily induced in even the best men by persistent silent sacrifice on their behalf. He simply did not see, did not know, did not understand his wife's trials and nature; but that he had deep tenderness in his heart is plain, both from his works, where it is shown imaginatively, and from things recorded of his own acts in these volumes and elsewhere. That his love was single and his loyalty entire these pitiful notes amply and painfully prove. But independently of him altogether, Mrs. Carlyle deserves remembrance for her own sake, not merely for the work done by her as a true wife, nor for the heroic spirit shown in the doing it, but for an intrinsically refined and gentle nature, the history of which leaves the impression that, although it always remained noble and attractive, it was injured by the circumstances amid which she was placed. The total effect of her letters, so far as they relate to herself, goes to confirm Miss Jewsbury's summary, that "the lines in which her character was laid down were very grand, but the result was blurred and distorted and confused."

VI

The literary handling of the mortal career of Thomas Carlyle has exhibited all the faults of which biography is capable. It has long been understood that very few men can write their own lives with veracity. Autobiographies are often useful because they exhibit something of personal charm or make tacit confession of weaknesses and singularities, as a genuine, sincere, vigorous character does in his real human intercourse; but they do not serve in the place of formal and impartial narrative of events and the view of personality from the outside. A man in the course of his life suffers many changes; his intellectual and frequently his moral point of view varies, and with each decade his past takes on a new perspective; he can never reproduce in imagination, still less in memory, what he was as he was; his identity, to risk a paradox, is self-effacing. Carlyle, in writing his "Reminiscences," was peculiarly at a disadvantage; he was in a mood of suffering, and he saw his past through the cloud of recent bereavement, which distorted its elements. His genius itself, so powerfully imaginative, and his emotion, which seems to have deprived him of the saving faculty of humor in some portions of his subject, were both against him; and, besides, he was an old man. Of the utmost value in the impersonal parts and of great moral interest in all that concerns himself (so far as his words are the judgment passed by a man upon his deeds at the close of his career), his "Autobiography" is but a small part of the material for his "Life," and is directly of worth for that purpose only as it is supported by the day-to-day record of documents, by the observation of

others, and by his own books. It was necessary that some one else should undertake the task of examining and reducing the copious materials which were in existence for a full biography.

Carlyle was scarcely more fortunate in his choice of one to intrust this labor to than he was in his selection of himself as the scribe of his works and days. Froude, if one considers only the judgment of the man, showed himself lacking not only in reticence and tact, but in any proper understanding of the nature of the Carlyles. This was a "grievous fault," and fatal to his success in the mere capacity of biographer. The trouble is not so much that he was indiscreet, and told more of the truth than good taste and friendly devotion to a friend's better self would warrant; but he made his blabbing disclosures without right discrimination, and so presented and arranged the facts, so molded them with his own mistaken conceptions, and colored them with what is essentially prejudice, that they served, no otherwise than as did Carlyle's own autobiographical writings, to give wrong impressions. The facts are thrown into confusion by the brooding of Carlyle in the one case and the perversion of Froude in the other.

So much has been clear this long time, but it now appears that Froude was guilty of gross negligence in his editorial work, as has been brought out by the comparison of the original materials with his printed transcripts; and he is further charged with warping the narrative by giving to certain parts of it a bias unfavorable to the Carlyles, in the face of the evidence before him. The only inference to be drawn is, that he was equally as careless in reading and sifting the original manuscripts as he was in attending to their correct

publication. The case against him is strong enough to convict. It is Carlyle, however, and not Froude for whom the world feels concern. Both the "Autobiography" and the authorized "Life" have elements of untrustworthiness in them as records of the exact truth of events and as portrayals of characters. Under the circumstances, what is there left for a friend of Carlyle who feels the injustice of this state of the case to the principals involved, except to publish faithfully such of the originals as may give to the public opportunity to correct, at first hand, the opinions formed on the grounds of Carlyle's confession and Froude's narrative?

This is the task which Professor Norton charged himself with. He attempts no narrative; he merely prints *seriatim* letters of Carlyle. At first these are the letters of a youth to two or three college mates, to his parents and brothers, and to the young lady whom he was destined to marry. They are the expression of a dutiful son and brother and of an interested friend, in regard to matters of family concern, his own health, his studies, pursuits, prospects; they are no more than this, for even in those letters to Jane Welsh which Professor Norton has thought it not unbecoming to publish, with one exception, Carlyle is the student and not distinctly the lover. He was engaged during these years either in teaching school or in private tutoring, with literature in the shape of hackwork slowly taking more and more of his time to its special service, until in the last year he was fully in the harness as a professional translator. It is not to be expected that he would have much of consequence to communicate, and, so far as intrinsic worth goes, we must frankly say there is little in these epistles that need detain the attention of men. It is singular

that there should be so slight intimation of any formed opinions; the young Edinburgher, periodically returning to the folks at home, read a great deal and thought about it, estimated it, wrote it out in the way of biography and translation, but had practically nothing of his own to say; or at any rate he did not intrust his meditations to letters. His mind was not developed. Carlyle, in the thoughts by which the world knows him, was not there.

What was there, however, was Carlyle's temperament. The native endowment of the youth stands out all the clearer because unconfused with any opinions. What this was is well enough understood: a quick eye for the oddities of human nature; a sound judgment of men, seemingly intuitive in its operation, but owing much to his inherited moral perceptiveness; ready intelligence, and a susceptibility to the poetic and the grotesque in man's life, so fruitful in later years; and, above all, the moral sense which was the main feeder of his genius. These things are to be felt continuously in his letters. Something of his style is also observable — lacking in brilliancy and power, but essentially there. For the rest, the only other thing which belongs to the indubitable Carlyle of fame is his dyspepsia. He writes of it from the first with an objurgatory vigor which has more of the distinct prophecy of his future in it than anything else to be found in the volumes and it is abundantly manifest, whether altogether because of this early and painful infliction or not, that he was an irritable person to live with, sharp-spoken, querulous, and hard-grained. He was proud toward the world, discontented, and ambitious; his own opinion of himself, happily justified by the event, was fully sufficient to sustain him in times of

difficulty and struggle of heart and hope, and he was fully conscious of his superiority at all points.

His letters to his parents, and their replies, are by far the most interesting; but less on Carlyle's account than as a picture of Scotch life. This special value was one reason why Professor Norton included so large a number of the family letters. The letters to Miss Welsh are mostly letters of advice respecting composition, without any marked character, and those of them which are not in the vein of "the guide, philosopher, and friend" are not very significant. The total value of the collection, consequently, is, as has been said, not great in itself. A hard-headed young Scotchman, well-met among his few friends, attached to his kin, and bound to get on by literature in which he had the wit to find the best — such was Carlyle from the close of his boyhood to his marriage in full manhood. His character, had he ended then, would have been nothing to the world.

The points in which the story, here spread before the reader in the original documents, differs from the account rendered by Froude in his own words, relate to the nature and relations of a few persons. They have no immediate intellectual interest; in fact, the whole subject belongs in the region of world gossip, which differs from village gossip only in the eminence of the persons involved. It was inevitable, after Froude's publication, but it was no less unfortunate, that public attention should be diverted from the intellectual history of Carlyle to the special point whether he treated his wife well. The moral ideals of Carlyle were neglected, the history of their genesis and development fell far into the background, and the question now asked was, What was his own moral practice in daily life? It is a pertinent inquiry in the

cases of all men who assume to be public teachers; it is often a useful one. But in Carlyle's case it is complicated by the fact that, in the particulars in which it is commonly held that he failed of manliness, he seems to have been unconscious of his errors at the time of committing them. Defects of nature, rather than dereliction of duty, are brought out in his family history; he was hard, selfish, and dull in some matters, but he was too much absorbed in his own life to be habitually conscious of these faults, though he was aware of them momentarily from time to time. His wrong-doing in these respects began early. He indulged his weaknesses of temper amid his own people, and often expressed contrition in words which plainly apply, not to single acts, but to a general course of conduct.

The main question, however, in these early years of his life concerns the position of Edward Irving in the group, and the circumstances which led to Carlyle's engagement with Miss Welsh and the feelings which the lovers entertained towards each other. Froude inspires the belief that Miss Welsh's attachment to Irving was of a deep and lasting kind, and that it remained in her heart in the state of a blighted affection. This circumstance, he says, Carlyle did not realize. Secondly, he intimates that the marriage was brought to pass by the interference of others, whose action at least hastened it; that Carlyle exhibited a selfish temper in the preliminary arrangements for a home, and showed himself in other ways something less than a man of sense and breeding. Professor Norton controverts Froude on all these points, which he treats of in his appendix. The evidence, so far as it is contained in the Carlyle love-letters, is not before the public; but Professor Norton, while withholding it,

clearly states that in his opinion this correspondence affords a view of Carlyle's and Jane Welsh's characters and mutual relations "different both in particulars and general effect from that given by Mr. Froude." So far as Irving is involved, Carlyle, while mentioning him with friendliness, has a clear eye for his foolishness, as he thinks it; and Miss Welsh, Professor Norton says, came to see "his essential weakness — his vanity, his mawkish sentimentality, his self-deception, his extravagance verging to cant in matters of religion." This seems to put an end to any notion that in her wedded life she compared her lot with Carlyle to "what might have been."

The letters in the second portion of Professor Norton's collection are in nearly all cases written to members of his family, and portions of a few of them were included, with many errors, in Froude's "Life." They afford a complete view of Carlyle's interests, labors, and temperament at an important and trying period of his life, and amply justify the hopes that such an epistolary autobiography would give not only a much needed correction of the false impressions made by Froude's method of dealing with his materials, but an entertaining and useful story of Carlyle's growth and nature. The most striking general feature of the letters is their simple and almost humble tone. Froude, by selecting for publication the most highly colored passages, and especially those most affected by emotion, melancholy, or picturesqueness of style, made his narrative altogether too high-strung. The larger mass of ordinary letters is needed to give proper relief to such moments of feeling. Carlyle's relations with his family — and these were the most vital and intimate of his life-relations — were natural and healthy; and they were in the highest degree honorable to him. One would look in

vain for a better example of filial or brotherly affection constantly alive, conscientious, and helpful. He was interested in the doings and fortunes of all, not in a generally sympathetic, but a specific and practical way, and he knew no difference between the "Doctor" at Rome and Naples and poor "Alick" struggling on his farm, under the hopeless conditions and hard surroundings of Scottish agriculture. He was always anxious to give and receive merely personal news, shared in their ventures and trials, and was ready with advice and encouragement.

The more interesting part is naturally the expression of the attachment between himself and his aged and pious mother, as it also exhibits character in a very pure form. Carlyle's mother, indeed, with her worryings over the children and her trust in God, her learning to write from him and her painful exercise of the pen, her reading of his books and articles, her limited experience beyond the Ecclefechan horizon, and her looking forward to the annual meeting with her son, is the most prominent character in the correspondence; and whenever he writes to her, the page is brighter for the beauty and tenderness of the relationship. To have brought out fully the fact of this tie, which was so large an element in Carlyle's human life, is sufficient reward; but when to this is added the spirit of the whole united family, struggling to live independently and worthily, and to better themselves and each other according to their opportunities, a great deal has been added to our knowledge of the good in Carlyle's days.

Next to this undiminished and simple family affection and helpfulness in Carlyle, one notes particularly his kindness to those whom he could in any useful way assist. He was hospitable really to any sincere and

honest young man, and did not limit his interest to literary youths. He was willing to do a good turn by the way to very humble and ordinary folk. The capital instance of his kindness, however, in these letters, is his attention to poor Glen, a disciple of his whose mind failed. He read Homer with him—much to his own pleasure, it is true, but that does not lessen the virtue of the act, and he was attentive, so far as was in his power, to his comfort and bettering. To Irving, too, his spirit is admirable in patience and love. The victim of what Carlyle most abhorred, he nevertheless was not suffered to become alienated from his heart, and Carlyle's pictures of the wretched condition of his friend are more full of sorrow than of the contempt he must have felt for the results of such a life as Irving came to lead. Towards Jeffrey, also, though one perceives the gradually widening rift between the two, Carlyle maintained as appreciative and grateful an attitude as was to be expected. Jeffrey himself nowhere in our accounts of him stands forth so amiably and acceptably as here. He was kind and helpful, according to his lights, when Carlyle needed friends, and will be so most pleasantly remembered. Mill's friendship and considerate services also are truly rendered, and, on the whole, one gets the impression that he was a truer and more interested friend than the correspondence properly shows. These are the principal human elements in the letters, outside of the family concerns, and they give an impression of general kindliness and good-will in the air—the very thing which Froude most left out.

Carlyle himself is egoistical as always; absorbed in himself, in his genius and its expression so much as to lend disproportion to the world of men outside him,

which he always beheld with a queer distortion. The keenness of his physical eye seems to have partly blinded him to moral and intellectual character less immediately and continually shown, and his proneness to a depreciatory judgment disturbed his little faculty of toleration. His mood was that of the prophet, and he carried it to the dinner-table, where it does not belong. The difficulty he found in obtaining expression for his genius doubtless contributed to this oblique view of ordinary human life. The necessity he seems under of talking to himself, as a driver does to his horse, to keep his courage up, is as obvious in all these letters as in any others. He preached to his own soul as pertinaciously as to the world, and in the same words. This strain, this unceasing reminder to himself to fear God and respect not men's judgments or ways, keeps on independent of his progress. He gradually left behind the schemes of taking professorships and lecturing, he burned his failures in literature, and came to a sure conviction as to his place and work, and the fate he was subject to of staying put, but without finding it easier to do so without self-declaration.

It is hardly fanciful to say that these apostrophes to himself and "lashings" of moral feeling were to him what, in another age and with other modes of the same faith, prayer and "wrestlings" would have been. They were his spiritual resource and the language of them. But in a certain way the constant repetition of these phrases and the fluency of these "communings" serve an end. It was one result of the publication of his opinions upon men and of his family history to turn attention from his works to his life; and it is well to find that the principles he preached were those he lived

by, that they were self-derived, genuine and native to his own struggles, and to observe in what way they operated in himself from day to day and year to year. The sight of struggle in its real forms, of tragedy unsoftened and unilluminated by the poetic spirit, is never pleasant; hard features are as disagreeable in a life as in a face, and in Carlyle's biography this element is trying always. But, although in these letters all this must enter, being a part of the truth, yet the value of Professor Norton's work, which is that of a just friend as well as of a laborious editor, is that it lowers the relief of these hard lines, and shows more fully the kindliness, the fidelity, and the true-heartedness of Carlyle, in which his manhood lay quite as much as in his self-rallying courage, his indignation at feebleness and folly, and his uncharitableness when his affections were not concerned. These volumes show his private life with those nearest and dearest to him, apart from his genius, and in this way — which is the way of truth — serve his memory as his friends would wish.

EDWARD FITZGERALD

EDWARD FITZGERALD, without being essential to the literary history of his time, has made to it the very real contribution of a pleasant memory. If these letters had unfortunately perished, his name would have allured the imagination of lovers of literature eager to know more of this shy, eccentric, modest man, the writer in his youth of a poem that Lamb envied him, and in age of a translation that added almost an original classic to English, the life-long friend of Tennyson, Thackeray, and Spedding. The publication of his correspondence, however, has dispelled the mystery and disclosed the man in his tastes, friendships, peculiarities — the whole range of his “innocent *far-niente* life” as it seemed to Carlyle. One recurs after reading these pages to Tennyson’s dedicatory poem addressed to Fitzgerald — perhaps the poet’s most masterly piece of light verse — only to be surprised at the truth of the characterization there given. There is nothing in these letters so fine as the picture in those opening stanzas of “Old Fitz” in his “suburb-grange,” with the rosy-footed doves flying about and perching upon him; but there are many touches that bring his temperament and life before us with a similar vividness and felicity. And the rest of Tennyson’s poem — the vegetarianism of his friend, “that large infidel, your Omar,” and even the discontent of Fitzgerald with the work of the Laureate, after 1842, so deftly glanced at in the last lines:

“When, in our younger London days,
You found some merit in my rhymes,
And I more pleasure in your praise” —

all this is amplified and illustrated, with much besides, just as the leisurely reader of Tennyson might wish it. The memoir has this poetical atmosphere; the life itself, an English country life, reminds one of what Fitzgerald writes of the County of Suffolk — “Now I say that all this shows that we in this Suffolk are not so completely given over to prose and turnips as some would have us. I always said that, being near the sea, and being able to catch a glimpse of it from the tops of hills and of houses, redeemed Suffolk from dullness, and at all events that our turnip fields, dull in themselves, were at least set all round with an undeniably poetic element.”

Tennyson does not touch at all upon Fitzgerald’s most marked trait. He was an Englishman of the closest attachment to things English. He never went out of the country but once, and then to the Netherlands, where he had a miserable sojourn, and he was thankful beyond most travelers when he got home again. He began life with this strong prepossession in an acute form. It breaks out early in life, when he excepts only Raphael for admiration among foreign artists, and he sums up the matter on the side of art at once — “To depict the true old English gentleman is as great a work as to depict a Saint John, and I think in my heart I would rather have the former than the latter.” The most complete expression of his patriotic feeling is a real British burst, as characteristic as American spread-eagleism: “Well, say as you will, there is not and never was such a country as old England — never were there such a Gentry as the English. They will be the distinguishing Mark and

Glory of England in History, as the Arts were of Greece, and War of Rome. I am sure no travel would carry me to any land so beautiful as the good sense, justice, and liberality of my good countrymen make this." He even writes to Frederick Tennyson abroad that he hopes the English travelers are "as proud and disagreeable as ever." He naturally thought the country was going to the dogs. He was not a Jingoist: he thinks, on the contrary, that the world may justly resent British interference "all over the Globe," and piously wishes that England were a "little, peaceful, unambitious, trading nation like — the Dutch!" Even his taste in music was affected: "I grow every day more and more to love only the old 'God Save the King' style."

The point must be insisted upon because this British instinct lay at the roots of his content with a voluntarily restricted life. He had, besides, a bent for eccentricity. He early declares that he has made a discovery for himself and is going to be "a great bear." Used though the phrase is with youthful exaggeration and humor, it marks the turn of his nature, and in a sense he fulfilled the prediction. Of his boyhood we learn nothing, as he was well out of college when he began the congenial habit of writing these friendly letters, which from the first are remarkable for literary judgment and are warm with true feeling. He was then, however, no more than a reader of books and a collector of fine poems from the best writers for his private Parnassus. One confidential passage gives a strangely vivid sense of how the young of each generation start together. He has been writing of Tennyson, who had been visiting him and keeping him laughing with his "droll" little humors and "grumpinesses," and he goes on to say that he felt a "sense of

depression at times from the overshadowing of a so much more lofty intellect than my own; this (though it may seem vain to say so) I never experienced before, though I have often been with much greater intellects; but I could not be mistaken in the universality of his mind; and perhaps I have derived some benefit in the now more distinct consciousness of my dwarfishness." He was then twenty-six and Tennyson was his junior by a year. Most of what is told of his younger days comes in the way of reminiscence in after life. Among these anecdotes one, drawn out by Spedding's death, is very lifelike. He and Tennyson visited Spedding at his father's house, and the elder Spedding is described as not altogether pleased at the sight of his son consulting with the poet over the "Morte d'Arthur," "Lord of Burleigh," and other pieces then in MS. Unfortunately he had known Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other "poets" without esteeming them, and as Fitzgerald played chess with Mrs. Spedding, and the daffodils danced outside the hall-door — "Well, Mr. F.," he would say, "Mr. Tennyson reads and Jem criticises; is that it?" But, notwithstanding the banter, he was kind enough to his son's friends. Such little pictures are one of the traits of the book.

It was not long before these friends submitted to the common fate and were separated by the different tenor of their lives. They met occasionally, but they did not live together; Fitzgerald was the only one who liked to send friendly letters, and so communication lessened to one epistle a year, and died out altogether. He went to live in the country, in a damp lodge outside his father's park, and he always had such bachelor quarters. He was intimate at first with old Bernard Barton, the Quaker

poet, whom, we believe, Lamb advised to throw himself over a precipice rather than cultivate the muse; and afterwards he liked to visit with the parson, a son of the poet Crabbe. Fitzgerald is described then as being a grave man, middle-aged at thirty-six, not seemingly very happy, though amusing at times in conversation. He rose early, read or wrote standing at a desk, had his dinner of vegetables and pudding, walked with his Skye terrier, and ended the evening with the Bartons or the Crabbes, singing glees with the children at the latter house and joining the parson over his cigar. He did not visit with the neighboring gentry. He describes it all himself: "A little Bedfordshire — a little Northampton — a little more folding of the hands — the same faces — the same fields — the same thoughts occurring at the same turns of road — this is all I have to tell of; nothing at all added — but the summer gone." As for "Alfred," he adds, "hydropathy has done its worst; he writes the names of his friends in water."

But this was not as empty a life as it seems; vegetarian though he was, "none could say that Lenten fare made Lenten thought." He had many interests of the cultivated man. He had been fond of the theater and concert in London, and he was still devoted to music; he was a buyer of pictures, and full of enthusiasm for those he liked, and he cultivated the acquaintance of Lawrence. The stream of some friendship never ceased to brighten the ways he walked in; and in books and nature he had as large a liberty as is often conferred on a man. The touches of nature are not infrequent in these jottings down of his moments, and they are often exquisite in feeling: "I am going this evening to eat toasted cheese with that celebrated poet, Bernard Barton. . . . It

blows a harrico, as Theodore Hook used to say, and will rain before I get to Woodbridge. Those poor, mistaken lilac-buds there out of the window! and an old robin, ruffled up to his thickest, sitting mournfully under them, quite disheartened!" Or again, in London, he writes: "I feel pleasure in dipping down into the country and rubbing my hand over the cool dew of the pastures, as it were." But such tender directness of description or felicity in phrase is a constant quantity, and belonged so much to his mind that he could not help blabbing out his delight. We quote a few more lines, less for the picture than the style; he had put away all books except Omar, but this, he says, "I could not help looking over in a paddock covered with buttercups and brushed by a delicious breeze, while a dainty racing filly of W. Browne's came startling up to wonder and snuff about me." For feeling like this expressed so well, one goes back far in literary taste, and in such passages we recognize the English that Tennyson praised so highly in speaking of the boat-race in "Euphranor"; it is — what so little description of nature now is — free from self-consciousness, and not by design, but by the character of the writer.

One is prepared to hear that Fitzgerald's tastes were not those of his generation in the case of many of the more notable authors. The most striking instance is that of Tennyson. He did not like "The Princess," nor "In Memoriam," nor the "Idyls," nor the dramas; he wished that there had been nothing after the 1842 volume, or he seems to fancy that he wished it; the poems after that date were below their author's destiny — that is apparently the feeling which underlies his judgment. But he expressed himself with great freedom: "In Memoriam," he says, "has the air of being evolved by

a Poetical Machine of the highest order; . . . the Impetus, the Lyrical oestrus, is gone." He asks what it can do except make all of us "sentimental." His last word almost is that Tennyson's genius has been injured by over-elaboration. It made no difference to him that other friends told him that this was perverseness, and that no one agreed with him. One part of the secret has just been hinted at: he worshiped — it is hardly too strong a word — Tennyson's power; he thought it was wasted on inadequate objects. This is the one human enthusiasm of the book. If he reads of Thucydides at Amphipolis, it is to burst out with, "Fancy old Hallam sticking to his gun at a Martello Tower This was the way to write well; and the way to make literature respectable. Oh, Alfred Tennyson, could you but have the luck to be put to such employment No man would do it better; a more heroic figure to head the defenders of his country could not be." He wishes for Tennyson's voice to awake "Marathonian men" instead of "mumbling" over "The Princess" and "In Memoriam." He longs "to take twenty years off Alfred's shoulders, and set him up in his youthful glory. . . . He is the same magnanimous, kindly, delightful fellow as ever, uttering by far the finest prose sayings of any one." There is no cooling of loyalty, one perceives, only the feeling that the performance is less than it should have been, the man more than his work.

This, no doubt, counts in analyzing the unfavorable criticism of Fitzgerald; but it was also the fact (and here lies the other half of the secret), that Fitzgerald's literary taste was distinctly old-fashioned — not modern, not contemporary at all, but in a strict sense was classical, and proceeded upon the universal canon of literature.

It is not meant, of course, that he was confined to Latin and Greek standards as expressed in ancient literature, but to the universal standard common to all great literature. Tennyson met his simple and pure taste and his unromantic (but not unpoetic) nature, in much; but in his later and pronounced manner he offended Fitzgerald's taste, both in matter and style. Other poets yet more strictly bound to their times and themselves than Tennyson naturally meet with no mercy at Fitzgerald's bar. He swept them — left nameless in these letters — to the namelessness that these blanks foretell, with as absolute a fiat as Carlyle ever used in similar cases. There is, too, one is compelled to think, something of truth in his friend's frank statement that he was "perverse." He set up for a man of taste — it was the only claim he put forward. He was not a genius, but he had taste, which, according to his aphorism, is the feminine of genius, and, being thus in his own eyes a critic by self-calling, he was, as Tennyson objects in his poem, "overnice." He was too much affected by the hair's-breadth lack of perfection in comparison with what was done. This is somewhat overstated, but it expresses well enough the element of error. After all, the main point is that modern poetry did not appeal to him.

This case of Tennyson is dwelt upon because it is illustrative of the unfavorable criticism to be found here and of its sources. It is criticism that well deserves to be understood and to be laid to heart, for it will help any one of real perception to a simpler and purer taste in poetry. The criticism which is favorable, however, far outweighs the fault-finding. Fitzgerald liked to write about what he enjoyed, and he enjoyed the best. The classics he read all his life with evident zest, and was

so seized by Æschylus and Sophocles that he could only free himself by translating them. He fell into a study of Spanish which resulted also in translation from Calderon, of course in his peculiar style of rendering; and then he began with Persian, out of which he gave us the "Omer" and other pieces of interest. This was a considerable amount of work, and, in connection with the editing of Crabbe and the delightful dialogue of "Euphranor," not to speak of minor matters, they show he was far from being an idler in his leisure. His readings in English were constant, also; and his taste was that which requires for itself "the best books." He found the tradition of the past as to the value of these great works in harmony with his own judgment; and at the end of his life he was more and more deeply sworn to Cervantes and Sir Walter Scott, Shakespeare, Boccaccio, and in general those authors who have best drawn human life with laughter as well as tears. It is interesting, finally, to note in a man so attached to the great works of literature that, though the friend of Thackeray, he was also delighted with Dickens and with other prose-writers of his own time; but in poetry he admitted only Tennyson and his two brothers, Frederick and Charles.

Nothing can be said of the interesting episode of his exploration of Naseby field (where he found a skull with a bit of the iron heel of the conqueror in it), with its sequel in Carlyle's friendly regard, which remained unbroken to the end. The veering of his judgment in respect to Carlyle is also noticeable, for at first he had no good words for him. Something, too, should be said of his less-known friends, and especially of the captain of his lugger, whom he generously assisted, and whom he thought so much of as to get Lawrence to do his head —

“with that complexion which Montaigne calls ‘vif, mâle et flamboyant,’ blue eyes and strictly auburn hair, . . . head of the large type, . . . a Gentleman of Nature’s grandest Type, . . . made in the mold of what a Humanity should be, Body and Soul, a poor Fisherman. . . . This is altogether the Greatest Man I have known.” Such are some of the phrases which he showered upon his Viking. There are traces, too, of a sympathy with the poor in their work and their suffering, and of a true sense of humble life. He was much touched by reality wherever he came near it. His letters are just and beautiful in expression when he mentions any matter of real sorrow, any bereavement or misfortune. His heart remained tender, and he was loyal to his friends. When Spedding died, they had been separated twenty years, and the genuineness of his feeling of loss which comes to the surface in two or three letters, is a remarkable illustration of the vitality of silent affection. When Tennyson came to see him after an equal interval of time, it was as if time had not been. His isolation from these old friends is somewhat pathetic, but he was without reproach, since the neglect to write was on their part. Tennyson never would write letters, and Spedding was a positive man given to a utilitarian rule of life, who would only write when there was some definite question to be answered.

Notwithstanding this, Fitzgerald had friends who came as others went, as is the way of the world, and they were always scholars and gentlemen, the best of their kind. Naturally, however, the tribute which will be most observed in his memory is that of the famous literary men who found him companionable in early and middle life. Tennyson wrote of him: “I had no truer friend; he was one of the kindest of men, and I have never known one

of so fine and delicate a wit." Thackeray, being asked not long before he died which of his old friends he loved most, told his daughter: "Why, dear old Fitz, to be sure"; and there is among these letters one from Thackeray asking Fitzgerald to attend to his literary affairs if he should meet with accident in America, which would be a treasure coming from any man. Of the wit which Tennyson mentions there is little in the correspondence, but the character which won and merited the regard and affection of friends shines upon every page. The modesty with which he withdrew his name from the public eye was probably a congenital trait, and it affected his whole way of life. He grew more unwilling even to go to London, finding only cleverness there, and the theater or opera was less able to attract him as years went on. The exhibitions, in which at one time he took great interest, became a bore. Reynolds, Constable, and Gainsborough are the leading topics in art, and in music Handel seems to have been most congenial, though he writes of the others with just judgment. His life, taken altogether, was a gratification of refined tastes and a simple exercise of unpretending virtues among his friends and acquaintances.

Original genius he did not possess, but his appreciativeness of excellence was sound and true; whenever he praises, one is compelled to assent. He spent the most of his energy in endeavoring to render foreign classics into English in such a way as to make them effective to modern taste. He did not write for those who could read the originals. He professed only to make adaptations rather than translations, and he cut and modified with a free hand. Scholars have praised his work for what it strove to accomplish, accepting the limitations which

his taste imposed upon it. Taste, however developed and refined, is still not genius, and it must be frankly acknowledged that he has not given us just what Calderon, Æschylus, and Sophocles created. His Persian translations vary even more widely from the originals. "Omar Khayyám" is a celebrated work in his version, but it is largely his own work, and it may be hoped that the other translations will become better known, for, without having the commanding qualities of Omar, they are studded with charming stories in verse, and not encumbered with Eastern moods of thought so much as to disturb a Western mind. The two poetical speeches of the English and Roman generals with their fine movement, are also a kind of translation — from prose to verse, though nearer to original composition. The dialogue of 'Euphranor' is the most considerable work of his own hand, and reaches what seems to be his ideal of writing — fine feeling in fine English. His name, however, is linked indissolubly with literature, in all probability, only in one work, the "Omar"; his memory will always be associated with the Tennyson group; besides, and by virtue of it, he will long be remembered by those who prize simplicity, refinement, and moral worth above the more vulgar quality of distinction.

HAWTHORNE

I

THIS story of Hawthorne's home-life, his relations to mother, sister, wife, and child, varies and deepens our impression of his personality, while it does nothing to disturb the tradition of his solitary genius. That he was born among peculiar people, and bred under an eminently unsocial domestic régime, is well known; but in this his circumstances were not so exceptional as might be thought. Madam Hawthorne, self-immured in her mysterious chamber, like the Aunt Mary whom Emerson describes in one of his posthumous papers, was not merely idiosyncratic: she was a legacy from the New England past, and in her own day and generation was not out of place; and her son, at a time when children were believed to be as happy as was proper without aid from their elders, and no thought was had of making companions of growing lads, was left to himself and his playmates much as other boys were. The family, it is true, seem to have reached the highest point of uncommunicativeness consistent with dwelling under the same roof; and, especially after Hawthorne's return from college, where he had proved a companionable fellow enough in his own set, this hermit-life within doors must have been powerful to confirm the hereditary taint of solitariness in him, derived from his Puritan and sea-going ancestors. Thrown back on the resources of his own spirit, he let solitude have its way with him, and thus he be-

came well acquainted with the gray rocks of the Marble-head promontory and the lovely reaches of the wooded Beverly shore, and, by the help of their silence, he made imagination the habit of his mind.

Meanwhile, in another New England household, also with a touch of peculiarity, was growing the woman who was to take Hawthorne out of this homelessness and found a family hearth of a very different character from that he had known. This woman was Sophia Peabody, a sister of Elizabeth P. Peabody; and the touch of peculiarity that has been alluded to showed itself mainly in connection with transcendentalism — a species of intellectual measles which was then very contagious among the feminine minds of the neighborhood. Sophia's mother was a woman of great good sense, and her father a kindly and helpful man, both of them excellent parents of the softer New England type. She herself was an invalid, subject to an "acute nervous headache which lasted uninterruptedly from her twelfth to her thirty-first year." She was an amateur in painting, moreover, and she wrote a journal, and she read books: "I read Degerando, Fénelon, St. Luke and Isaiah, Young, the 'Spectator,' and Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors,' 'Taming of the Shrew,' 'All's Well that Ends Well,' and 'Love's Labor's Lost,' besides doing some sewing to-day." This, in the case of a girl of nineteen, who is said never to have been without pain for an hour, was a good stint. She was not without enjoyment, too, in an epistolary way: "I have written a long letter to Miss Loring this evening," she says at the same time, "with the moon all the while in my face. This is revelry!" As an example of "the growth and advancement of her mind" during the next eight years, her son prints further extracts from her

confidential papers, of which these two, written when Hawthorne was falling in love with her, will suffice:

"Last night I was left in darkness — soft, grateful darkness — and my meditations turned upon my habit of viewing things through the 'couleur de rose' medium, and I was questioning what the idea of it was — for since it was real there must be some good explanation of it — when suddenly, like a night-blooming cereus, my mind opened, and I read in letters of paly golden-green words to this effect: The beautiful and good and true are the only real and abiding things — the only proper use of the soul and nature. Evil and ugliness and falsehood are abuses, monstrous and transient."

"I have read Carlyle's 'Miscellanies' with deep delight. The complete manner in which he presents a man is wonderful. He is the most impartial of critics, I think, except Mr. Emerson. Every subject interesting to the soul is touched in these essays. Such a reach of thought produced no slight stir within me. I am rejoiced that Carlyle is coming to America. But I cannot help feeling that Emerson is diviner than he: Mr. Emerson is Pure Tone."

While Sophia was engaged in such meditations, and the romancer, having discovered his occupation, was at hard labor handling coal and salt in the Boston Custom-house, their fate found them out and they confessed they had loved at first sight. It was impossible, however, that such an invalid as Sophia should be married, and it was agreed that their union must wait the cessation of the headache that had lasted without intermitance nearly a score of years. Love was good to his new devotees, it scarcely need be said; the cure was soon affected, and with the headache, apparently, disappeared also that peculiar Bostonian malady already mentioned. There is nothing more about "paly golden-green letters," or Mr. Emerson in his incarnation as "Pure Tone."

Sophia became a faithful wife and a kind mother, the center of a very charming home.

It is the history of this home that Julian Hawthorne has written. By the help of his father's very copious notes of the sayings and doings and looks of the children — Una, Julian, and Rose — and with his own recollections of boyhood to draw upon besides for the later period, he has taken us into the intimacy of the household, and confided the charm and dignity and wisdom of Hawthorne's fatherhood. And this he has done in a narrative so instinct with tender respect and unquestioning love, so full of a frank, boyish spirit, of the loyalty that has never contemplated the King's doing wrong, that the critic is constrained to take his point of view and accept this biography, not as a critical and complete life, but as a friendly confidence. It is, indeed, so far as the children are concerned, a lovely story, whether the thin tent of the family was pitched by the Concord River, or the Salem wharves, or among the Berkshire hills, or whatever the place of their sojourning — Liverpool, or Rome, or the Redcar Sands, or the Wayside, in which the last days were spent. Some passages, of Hawthorne's own writing, are masterly. There could be nothing more perfect, as mere literary description, than the minute narration of the play of Una and Julian while Madam Hawthorne lay dying; nothing more pathetic than the scene where Hawthorne himself kneels by his mother's dark bedside and takes her hand, and feels that last dead strain of the cords of birth across all the strangeness of their divided lives, while the childish laugh and prattle float up from the sunny yard below. And Julian, in contributing to the account of his own boyhood, has not injured its simplicity and health by the intrusion of

any after self-consciousness. From the moment that he comes under cognizance as a lump of flesh to the last fine scene, when he runs over from Harvard to ask a favor and goes out with "light upon him from his father's eyes," not knowing it was the last glimpse, he is merely Hawthorne's boy who once wished that his father didn't write books. But, naturally, all this is contained in an account of small matters, little events, walks and swims, and books by the fireside and fairy stories on the sands, and not unfrequently the touch of nature is to be found in a mass of irrelevant trivialities.

Yet this happy home of Hawthorne's maturity was not more exceptional, for the time and social state in which he found himself, than had been the case with the lonely isolation of his boyhood, with which it stands in such effective contrast. In each, although its peculiar quality of reserve or freedom was accented, there was only a divergence in degree from a New England type. Madam Hawthorne, and all that her name stands for in Hawthorne's life, belong to Puritanism; his own home was in the highest sense humane; and in view of this contrast it is easy to see why Julian, with his fresh and exclusive remembrance of the sunshiny interior of Hawthorne's latter years, should protest very loudly against the not uncommon opinion that his father was the victim of a certain morbidity. On the contrary, he says, never was there such health, sanity, vigor — all manly traits and qualities, capacities and energies. Certainly, by comparison with the life out of which Hawthorne came, and perhaps even more clearly by comparison with the Transcendentalists, the Brook-Farm reformers, the prophets and prophetesses among whom he was thrown, moral health and mental sanity and the

vigor of an incorruptible common-sense seem to be peculiarly his possession — one is almost tempted to say, his alone. When a man of his spiritual insight and sensibility, so open to fine suggestions, so tenacious of impalpable meanings, could say of a friend like Emerson: "Mr. Emerson is a great searcher for facts, but they seem to melt away and become unsubstantial in his grasp," the criticism goes far to reveal his own balance, the continence and repose of his own mind. He saw clearer and deeper than the theorizers into the transcendent mystery there is in the soul's life, not only because he had more delicate impressions and simpler perceptions, but also because his relation therewith was vital and not merely intellectual, and, instead of being a subject of spasmodic reflections, shared in the inflexible reality of direct moral experience. He was not one of the Concord men, and that fact by itself helps a good deal his son's claim that he was not fairly open to any charge of crankiness. Yet that there was some morbidity in his blood, a tendency to certain subjects of investigation, a bent toward certain moods of sentiment, a preoccupation of his mind with death, evil, sin, and the fantasies of an overwrought spiritual sensibility, can hardly be seriously questioned.

In the same way, Julian does not make out that his father was essentially a social man. Even inside the family circle, companionable as he was with his children, it is to be remembered that they had scarcely reached the period of full, separate consciousness in their lives when he died. In his social relations with his friends he was, it is true, acceptable, but it is here that the biography is weakest; what is given is very meager and commonplace, and there is an utter failure to show any *raison d'être* in these friendships — from what attrac-

tion they took their origin, or in what strength was their bond, or in what charm they had their sweetness. In his shyness with strangers there was something of pure rusticity: one notices that he is always thinking what he should say or what he might have replied, or by some other remark shows that he is always conscious of an effort in assuming the social relation with a stranger of his own rank. Toward some who are associated with his circle, it is plain he was far from being on open terms. Ellery Channing, for example, to judge by the letter of that poet's inditing, could not have been very near to him, and Margaret Fuller must have been grievously deceived by his silence. One would have thought that the denunciation launched at Froude for publishing Carlyle's "Reminiscences" with as little regard to reputations as Carlyle himself had, might have deterred others from doing likewise; but now it seems doubtful whether it may not be acknowledged as a literary canon that the laws of good breeding do not extend beyond the grave, or, to put it in a still more comprehensive form, that no courtesy is to be expected of a dead man. In this biography there are two characterizations of the kind that are usually sealed up until the year 1950. That of Tupper — the most comical and diverting thing in the world — that of Margaret Fuller (what is said of Count d'Ossoli is shamefully wrong), show how Hawthorne's humor, secreted in his own breast, helped to keep him free from the literary coteries, the shams and intellectual afflictions of his community:

"It was such an awful joke, that she should have resolved — in all sincerity, no doubt — to make herself the greatest, wisest, best woman of the age. And to that end she set to work on her strong, heavy, unpliable, and, in many respects,

defective and evil nature, and adorned it with a mosaic of admirable qualities, such as she chose to possess; putting in here a splendid talent and there a moral excellence, and polishing each separate piece, and the whole together, till it seemed to shine afar and dazzling all who saw it. She took credit to herself for having been her own Redeemer, if not her own Creator; and, indeed, she was far more a work of art than any of Mozier's statues. But she was not working in an inanimate substance, like marble or clay; there was something within her that she could not possibly come at, to recreate or refine it; and, by and by, this rude old potency bestirred itself, and undid all her labor in the twinkling of an eye. On the whole, I do not know but I like her the better for it, because she proved herself a very woman after all, and fell as the weakest of her sisters might."

No, not with Margaret Fuller, nor Ellery Channing, nor even with Emerson and the geniuses he was forever picking up in the highway or the potato-field, any more than with the politicians of the Custom-house, could Hawthorne enter into absolutely free social relations. One suspects that his college and his English friends were more accessible to him, because they were wholly unrelated to that part of his nature which fed the flame of his genius. That genius was solitary; and throughout the long narrative of his cheerful and intimate life with the children, one sees that he kept his privacy always, and the witness of it is that path beneath the pines on the brow of the hill, worn by his feet in his daily evening walk by himself as he watched the sunset flush and fade in the west.

This biography is like Mr. James's "Hawthorne" in that it fails to give any history of that immortal part of the man in which the world takes interest. Julian's point of view is completely shown when he says of Haw-

thorne, "If he had never written a line, he would still have possessed, as a human being, scarcely less interest and importance than he does now"; and adds that his father's books struck him, when he came to read them, "as being but a somewhat imperfect reflection of certain regions of his father's mind with which he had become otherwise familiar." One is pleased, for the boy's sake, that to him the genius was lost in the father, but to the world it is just the contrary; and to many it may prove a disappointment to find only a delightful father (not wholly unique, be it added), where they had hoped for some inner glimpses of a fine genius. Hawthorne, the romancer, was as remote from his domestic life as from the provincial civilization on which Mr. James dwelt. Indeed, the latter's account of Hawthorne, not to speak it profanely, seemed as if he had made a very careful realistic study — a "portrait," he would probably have called it — of a certain little Judean town we all know of, and exclaimed, "Lo! how parochial Nazareth was!" Mr. James might find much in these volumes to support his thesis; he might smile to read, for example, that Hawthorne owned no picture until he was in middle life, and then, when Sophia painted him one or two, which he thought very beautiful, he wrote that perhaps they had better be put into mahogany frames to match the furniture, probably (one half overhears Mr. Howells adding) of the black hair-cloth variety. But Hawthorne's genius was a thing apart from all that, just as it was apart from his children's lives. It was of the imagination, pure and simple, and had no root in culture whether meager or rich; and except as his genius expressed itself through art, it seems to have been as reticent as Shakespeare's.

II

It may be true, as Mr. Conway remarks, that "there are few authors with whom the world is more intimate than the one supposed to have most shunned its intimacy." The confessions of the Note-books, the revelations made by his son and his son-in-law, and the not inconsiderable mass of reminiscences in other volumes, may lead one to this broad statement; but on finishing Mr. Conway's account one still finds Hawthorne's actual life remote, and is not a whit nearer to any knowledge of that genius which, even in his solitary life, seemed to make a new solitude of its own.

The story is in itself most depressing, mainly because of the circumstances which it records. Hawthorne appears to have been sensible that his infelicity had its beginnings in the period of his seclusion at Salem. It does not seem that in boyhood or youth he was unsociable or eccentric; the absence of companions, however, after he left college, the increasing habit of a naturally brooding genius, the sense that he was making no impression on the world as year by year passed by, must have developed in him (perhaps without his taking notice of it at once) the reticence and withdrawal into self which were traits of his Puritan and sea-faring blood. Dr. Loring's account of the neglect of him by Salem people (for the city was a place of some intellectual culture) is very much to the point. He was not known as an author, and he was not of the sort that makes friends. There was nothing extraordinary in his being "let alone." The same thing would happen to-day in any community. Hawthorne's isolation proceeded from himself. Nor

does it appear that his "shyness" was merely the attribute of peculiar genius. Self-consciousness and pride, as well as temperament, went to its making. How much he prized success as a proof of manliness is clear from that letter to Hillard in which he accepts his friend's assistance, but calls it "bitter," and adds that "ill-success in life is really and justly a matter of shame." The sense of failure, as something by no means remotely possible in his case, was as present to him as his shadow for years. His withdrawal from literary men in particular is noticeable. On the other hand, the ease with which he met men of a rougher mold, the ordinary people of the common sort, and the pleasure he plainly took in the contact with them, are not less significant. He had no need to remember that he was "the obscurest literary man in America" in the presence of men to whom all literary men were perhaps equally obscure. He felt, doubtless, also in their company that relief from the "bodiless creation" which occupied his mind when by himself; but the point of interest is, that there was no "shyness" in his intercourse with these companions. The lack of recognition of his genius, and a manly spirit offended by its lack of seeming efficiency, certainly aggravated unfortunate tendencies in his disposition.

The extent to which society is responsible for its sins of omission in the way of not at once knowing and encouraging its men of literary genius, is a question too often discussed only from the point of view of the poor author. There was a tendency to ascribe the difficulties of our literary men in the past, to the lack of an international copyright. Mr. Conway gives unlimited influence to this fact in discussing the trials of Hawthorne. It may fairly be questioned, whether the un-

known writer of short stories under various signatures, in various periodicals, would have greatly benefited in his early days by the best of copyright regulations between England and America. As it was, he had the kindest assistance in getting before the world, so far as friends could give any. Horatio Bridge privately assumed the financial responsibility for his collected volume of tales, and, so far as criticism could be helpful, he had Longfellow and Hillard to plead his cause with all the warmth of friendship, in addition to the weight of their criticism. At a later time Fields was the most stimulating and generous of publishers. Apart from literature, also, Hawthorne's friends endeavored repeatedly to obtain office for him, and succeeded in giving him custom-house appointments in Boston and Salem; and when the latter was cancelled, they gave him money in the most unassuming and considerate way. Finally he received the Liverpool Consulate from his friend President Pierce.

It is true that there is much meanness of a political color in his holding of these offices, which were in themselves little fitted for him, and also that they killed literature in him while he held them. Mr. Conway thinks there was something ignoble in the price paid for the Consulate, namely, the campaign biography of Pierce, and Hawthorne clearly thought it an unwelcome task; but there is no inherent impropriety in a man of letters writing a fitting life of his friend who happens to be a candidate for the Presidency. It may be presumed that if he regards him sufficiently to own him as a friend, he can find enough to praise without compromising his own integrity; and if at the same time he serves a political cause in which he believes, so much the more reason for

his doing his part as friend and citizen. It is displeasing to know that Hawthorne's opinions upon slavery were wrong, but not to know that he expressed them; and we cannot help thinking that it is the character of Pierce, and not the act of Hawthorne, which makes this incident so unpalatable to Mr. Conway. Had the story been the life of Lincoln, feelings with regard to it would probably be of a different sort. Hawthorne was reluctant to write the book, and he was quite as reluctant, no doubt, to apply for office, or for retention in office, by the customary channels. His political servitude for bread must have always been repugnant; but Government did the best it could for him under the spoils system, his friends were active and interested always, and his publishers and editors seem to have paid him all just dues. To complain that the nation did not provide proper place or pension for Hawthorne, when it provides them for no literary man, or that society did not buy his books in sufficient quantities to support him before he became famous, seems beside the point. Literature is not with us a matter of national concern or of social patronage; it stands on its own bottom, and, under American ideas, is likely to do so.

The fact is, that the notion that the country suffers some disgrace in consequence of the domestic hardships and modest purse of Hawthorne and others in the pursuit of literature, is a relic of the paternal tradition of aristocratic society, which made men of letters a favored class, and gave them charity much in the same spirit as those who would exempt soldiers from the civil-service examinations. Hawthorne received the same treatment as every other citizen. Mr. Conway's assumption, therefore, that the country was in some way responsible for

Hawthorne's troubles, and should have "protected" him from them, seems a fundamental error. He suffered the not unusual consequences of choosing a precarious and ill-paid career, the fruits of which are reaped rather by posterity than by the author, but this latter fact is one of the greatest inducements to it, under the form of fame or of social service. Hawthorne suffered poverty, but not injustice; he achieved a unique success, and honor with it, at the end, and he receives from his country all that he is entitled to — immortal memory.

LONGFELLOW

THE official biography of Longfellow is characterized by its good manners. There is no line in it, any more than in his poems, which the poet dying would wish to blot, and this is double good fortune. Those who were his acquaintances need not fear any disillusion as to their place in his real esteem, and those who worshiped him from afar will find no appreciable lessening of the proper heroic distance between themselves and the object of their devotion. At the end, it is as if one had grown familiar with the study at Craigie House, had heard the poet talk of his past and his books with a discreet suppression of names not already public by virtue of their owner's repute, and had listened to extracts from the journals and correspondence, while all the time the doors leading out of the library are kept closed. The editor — and he is indeed only an editor — adopted that modern substitute for autobiography which consists in a selection and arrangement of papers written by the man himself and connected by the slightest thread of narrative. He says in his preface that this method is one by which "the reader would best learn how a man of letters spends his time and what occupies his thoughts." This plan was rigidly adhered to, and consequently the work is essentially Longfellow's diary, expanded and illustrated in parts by letters, and exhibits to the public the surface of events and thoughts in the life of a poet, in the literary and social environment of Boston, who was one

of the most cultivated members of the group that gave distinction to the period.

The editor himself describes this life as that of a man of letters; and whether or not he meant to distinguish sharply between the phases of Longfellow's career as poet and as scholar, the effect of the mode of biography chosen is to present its subject as a scholar who wrote poetry rather than as a poet primarily and always. In nearly all accounts of men in whose lives the world takes interest there are some salient points, some deeds or works or incidents which have attracted attention to the individual; but in telling the story in detail the biographer often finds difficulty in managing those intervals in which his hero's days did not differ from those of ordinary mortals. It is in such portions that the much lamented "disillusion" usually makes itself known. In Longfellow's case the writing of a series of poems has drawn the curiosity of men toward his personality, and if one would get at the true record of his poetic life, that would be the biography for which men would care most; but that is a very secret matter, and hard both to discover and to disclose. Moods visited him and he wrote; but between these, and filling up the intervals of his poetic life, was a life of letters, and it is this life of which his diary was a transcript. This was easy both to record and to publish. Longfellow himself tells us what he thought of its relative importance in his real history: "How brief this chronicle is, even of my outward life. And of my inner life, not a word. If one were only sure that one's journal would never be seen by any one, and never get into print, how different the case would be! But death picks the locks of all portfolios and throws the contents into the street for the public to scramble after." Waiv-

ing all question as to the degree of privacy to which a poet's life is entitled, let us take it at once on this best authority that the diary which is spread before us is not the true record of a poet's soul, but the jottings of what happened to him in the body, the cities he saw, the men and women he met, the scenes of natural beauty and childish festival he witnessed, the society he dined and talked with, the books he read or wrote, and such of his thoughts, sentiments, and moods as he was not unwilling that the public should "scramble after." The letters, both of his own inditing and from others, which supplement the diary, will not affect the matter, since they belong to the same outer region of life.

It has generally been believed that Longfellow's life was, in its human relations and its social material surroundings, very charming; in these volumes this opinion is sustained by page after page of detail. Whether as host or guest, as son, father, or citizen, as stranger or as bosom friend, the element of urbanity pervaded his character. One finds it only too easy to quote instances in which his refined amiableness gave beauty to trivial or even mean and intrinsically ugly incidents. This social phase of the biography presents our cultivation in the intercourse of life with the greatest perfectness which it has yet found in any literary record; the diary, in this regard, becomes at once an indispensable part of the *memoirs* of manners. So much is true of it in relation to the entire coterie (and it was not a very small band) of which Longfellow was one of the members; but beyond this, some of the individuals whom he habitually mentions gain in agreeableness by what he has to say of them. To take the most notable instance, it is certainly impossible to lay down the volumes without a much pleasanter

impression of Charles Sumner's nature than the public has thus far entertained. Longfellow was not blind to the grandiose quality in his friend, but he writes of him so warmly, and displays his attachment in so many ways, and insists so often upon the affectionate, humane, and simple heart of his Herculean orator, that the statuesque memory of the Senator loses something of the chill which has belonged to it; and the glimpses one gets of Sumner during his frequent visits to Craigie House display him in an attractive guise. On the other hand, Sumner's friendship seems to have reacted on Longfellow, to develop in him an interest in politics and to quicken his patriotism and enlarge his life with public sympathies. The vigor and decision of Longfellow's remarks upon the state of the country, the clear and certain tone whenever that conflict of "the North wind against the Southern pestilence" is spoken of, free him from the doubt which has been sometimes indulged, that he secluded himself from the great cause of his day more than befitted a complete man. There is evidence enough in these pages to show how intense and constant was his aversion to the violence of politics, but in spite of that he entered into the spirit of the time, and from an early period had his heart in the right place. That this was in some degree due to his intimacy with Sumner also seems plain; and thus the withdrawal of the veil of privacy from their friendship is a gain to the memory of both.

The social feature in Longfellow's life is, perhaps, the leading trait of this work and its most immortal part; its charm is to be felt, as the editor justly says, only by the perusal of a multitude of details as they follow day by day in the record of the poet's own hand. Scarcely second to this, however, is his friendship and association

with books. From early years his genius was fed from this source; and the fortunate accident of time, which made his graduation at Bowdoin College coincident with a desire on the part of the trustees to found a chair of modern languages, determined his fate as a poet who should lean much on books. The travels and studies which were undertaken to fit himself for the prospective professorship may be said to have controlled his career. He returned with an admirable literary culture, which his later post at Harvard helped to perfect. His reading from that time was in Continental rather than English literature, and his poetry showed its influence. It is true that he derived many poetic impressions directly through the eye in the course of his journeys abroad, but for the most part he obtained them through the foreign romantic poets and the primitive imagination of the northern bards. Had he been in closer contact with poetic motives in life itself, he might have been touched with passion; but as he felt them at second-hand, as it were, he could not lift his mood higher than the region of sentiment in that considerable portion of his work which deals with medievalism, or with the contemporary picturesqueness which still survives in the ruins of the Gothic past. In those parts of his poetry where the literary influence is less obvious, it is no less potent. He was a poet who was developed by books, and not by experience; even when he draws from life itself, his cunning is bookish. This is the impression already given by his works, and his biography makes it deeper. It is the "man of letters" whose history is given to us. The poetic temperament, nevertheless, is very frequently to be observed. The susceptibility of the organization to slight changes in the surroundings; the restlessness,

the weariness, the fret of the spirit; the delight in receiving the impression, and the reluctance to work it over into expression; the joy in the vision that comes at the rare moment, and the shrinking from the labor of the spell that bids it stay forever and be seen of all eyes — these and the other common qualities of temperament which are often as keen in those who have no faculty of language, can be noticed throughout all his long life. Longfellow's personality is revealed in these passages, but this is merely the light and shadow of life's surface; the poetic nature is deeper than that. Probably the point of view under which he is viewed in his own diary is the correct one, as it is the common one among critics. His art, taste, and treatment present the qualities of culture; and the poems of which the theme is immediately from life about him are just those which cause him to be called "the poet of the affections." Outside of home-life, books were his inspiration; in other words, generally he was sustained in the poetic mood by the beauty and virtue of which he read.

Some light is thrown upon Longfellow's methods of composition. He wrote with singular ease; indeed, we recollect no poet of equal rank who is known to have been blessed with like facility. The shorter poems and the "psalms" came to him without effort, sometimes "by whole stanzas and not by lines," as he says, and they required little correction — usually, it seems, only the strengthening of a phrase, but no complete recasting. Similarly with the long poems, when his subject was once settled on and the work begun, he apparently ran on "trippingly," and was satisfied with the corrected first draft. This shows admirable mastery as well as speed, while it suggests that the feelings of the poet were not excited to any great

energy. One notes, too, that his subjects for shorter poems were frequently selected and the poems written later; a practice which generally indicates the forcing of a poet's talents. Another characteristic, which is rich in suggestions to an analyzer of literary men, is the habit he exhibits of setting down in his diary striking figures of rhetoric heard in sermons or elsewhere, not for the sake of the thought, but of the form. Sometimes one comes upon a landscape sketched in a few exquisite lines, but such entries do not seem to be notes for future work. On the whole, the young poet will not learn much about the craft from these volumes; so far as anything can be inferred from such slight material, equability marked his poetic life as invariably as it did his social intercourse.

Thus this biography in nowise contradicts or modifies the popular estimate which was long ago arrived at in respect to the poet. It merely sustains and amplifies the opinion that has been so often expressed. One is not surprised by the gift of the intimate and unguessed record of a noble soul — one of those memories which are shrines of the ideal life; but one reads what was to be expected, a full and delightful history of the external aspects of a lettered life in a refined society, as it was led by a man who fulfilled his duties in the varied relations of his sphere in a way that made his days beautiful and his memory a humanizing influence upon all who have any perception of the sources of its charm. Our polite literature gains greatly by this. Nevertheless these volumes are neither a complete account nor a thorough study of Longfellow's life. They occupy in his works a similar place to Hawthorne's note-books. Autobiography is of necessity an imperfect view of its

writer's individuality; it is usually invaluable, it is often agreeable, but it is always insufficient. Other memoirs must supplement this by showing how he seemed to the eyes of others, and the scholar who seeks the genesis of his poems must establish the logical connection between the life and the works. Of his personality we are not likely to know more — one suspects there was really little more to know.

A supplementary volume is principally devoted to further illustration of the last fifteen years of the poet's career, when he was enjoying the fruits of his fame in the formal respect of whatever persons of distinction visited our shores, and in the common appreciation of his countrymen, whose expressions of esteem were sometimes more awkward and tedious, but not of less worth.

Here the poet is seen almost entirely in his mature manhood, or perhaps one may fairly say in his old age, since his principal original works were all completed before the period of the last fifteen years set in. The scene practically does not change, the habits of life are fixed, the character of the whole has complete harmony. This limitation of the view gives a unity of impression rarely to be derived from the entire story of an active life, and the time, fortunately, is that when Longfellow was most attractive. He was most dear to his country as an old man, and that is the character in which he is presented. His qualities, too, as a man were those which age most improves — his universal kindness, his dignity of breeding, his reposeful nature, could have full effect only with ripe years; and one so given to permanent friendships as he was, could not fail to grow happier in their exercise, and more noble through them in proportion as they lasted out time and tide. The story of Long-

fellow's care for his friend Greene is, in these new illustrations of it, one of the delightful episodes of literary biography.

In the way of literature, Longfellow was employed in these years upon the drama, and the simplicity of his remarks upon it are instructive, though they provoke a smile. He was not efficient as a dramatist, and perhaps no competent critic would claim for him dramatic genius. He illustrates how far drama has drifted from literature. Evidently he had not thought much upon the general subject, and was but little skilled in knowledge of its conditions or in criticism of its aims, methods, or effects. One finds him saying, after reading Victor Hugo: "Perhaps exaggeration is necessary for the stage; I am inclined to think it is. A play, like a bust or statue destined for a large room, must be a little larger than life." He speaks of Fechter's Hamlet thus: "It is pleasant to see anything so like nature on the stage; not the everlasting mouthing and ranting." He contemplated having the "New England Tragedies" acted, and wrote to Fields: "As to anybody's 'adapting' these Tragedies for the stage, I do not like the idea of it at all. Prevent this, if possible. I should, however, like to have the opinion of some good actor — not a sensational actor — on the point. I should like to have Booth look at them." He actually consulted Bandmann with regard to the matter, and sets down the answer: "Bandmann writes me a nice letter about the Tragedies, but says they are not adapted for the stage." That Longfellow should have dreamed of having them acted, shows how far out of his element he was in composing them. The drama was to him a book, not an art.

Elsewhere he makes some admirable remarks that

spring out of his practice of the art, always wise and sometimes profound, as is this: "It is a great mystery to many people that an author should reveal to the public secrets that he shrinks from telling to his most intimate friends." The profound thing in this, if any one should not at once understand our application of the word, is that he does not stop to explain the "great mystery"; to him it is simple enough. But one does not often meet with the humor shown in another sentence, in a letter to Greene: "You cannot improve a sonnet by making it more than fourteen lines long." It is strange that, with such playfulness as he exhibits here and there, and seems to have indulged in more easily in conversation, so little expression of it is to be found in his works. For this quality one must go to these volumes, though there are scenes in 'The Golden Legend' in which it has colored the language and occasionally touched a character. The absence of the classical influences in his career is noticeable. He finds in the Greek anthology only "dead garlands." Of self-criticism there is little. He remarks how much learning Sumner brought back from Italy, where he himself had gained only impressions; and the joy of the sentimentalist in remaining unconvinced is happily expressed when he says, "I let the waves of argument roll on; but all the lilies rise again, and are beautiful as before." The poet writing in prose is often to be observed in similar figures and sentiments, and once or twice there is a brief letter — the one of consolation "To —," for example — which is "an entire and perfect chrysolite."

There are others besides Longfellow in these pages. As we have remarked before, his life is a memorial of a distinguished circle as well as of a man. This impres-

sion is the stronger because the view of his domestic life has been practically suppressed, and he has been shown only in his relations with his books and his friends. Fortune favored him in both. Sumner, as before, gains by all that is told of him or by him. One is tempted to think that only Longfellow knew him as a man. The letters of "Tom Appleton" afford much that is delectable. The description of Mrs. Browning, in 1856, as "a little concentrated nightingale living in a bower of curls," has the old touch; but best of all is his quoting "an expression of Mr. T. Lyman to me years ago: 'The bother of the Yankee,' said he, 'is that he rubs badly at the junction of soul and body' — as true a thing as ever was said, and he not much of a sayer of such things."

MOTLEY'S CORRESPONDENCE

THE correspondence of an illustrious man, printed often more because of his reputation won in some one field than for the interest of the letters in themselves, is an unfair test of his intellectual or social attractiveness; and in the case of an historian in whose work the telling mental qualities are largely different from those which give vivacity and brilliancy to impromptu letters, this test works with special incompleteness. Motley certainly, in addressing his wife, children, and a few intimate friends, did not write for immortality. He had not the point in style, the variety in interests, the copiousness of opinions which give charm and body to a collection of personal letters; and, although he mingled in the society of famous men and fine women, and was near to great events, he had not that quickness of eye and literary power of brief description which could have painted the historical scene before him in a picturesque and enlivening manner. His methods of conceiving history were alien to such a task; he required a large canvas and heroic figures, and something of the breadth that goes with the spectacular, before he could deploy his mind and imagination. And, besides, there was so considerable a moral element in his enthusiasms, a sense of the forces of history so deeply underlying his serious work, that he was to a certain extent disarmed and taken at a disadvantage in the presence of the personal, the immediate and fragmentary character of passing and

incomplete events. These two volumes, consequently, notwithstanding their real interest in many ways, are a disappointment, if any one looks in them for more than illustrations and fuller knowledge of the man's character as it was in daily and private life; but if one is content to look for no more than this, they afford the portrait of an American whom his fellow-countrymen will be more proud to acknowledge after their perusal — one who did honor to his country by his personal bearing among men, by his living and thinking in ordinary ways, quite as much as by his literary fame.

He belongs distinctly to a type that is passing away, or at least is suffering such changes outwardly and inwardly as to be taking on a new form. He was one of the Boston boys when Boston was more preëminently a commercial town, with all that means on the social side of life. He was educated at Bancroft's Northampton school and at Harvard College, and at an early age went to Europe for legal study at German universities and for travel, and of all these opportunities he made a serious use. The first stirring of his historical imagination and the beginning of his fluent and ample style may readily be discerned in his pleasant letters home, which are what such letters from such a youth should be, but have only autobiographical value. The trial of his talents in novel-writing, and the reasons why he selected the Netherlands as the scene of his historical labors, are not touched upon in these letters; the collection suffers from the lack of continuity in the series, both here and in later life. After his departure for Europe, however, there is sufficient material to make out plainly and fully the quiet student life he led, the absorption of his mind in his work, and the visitings of

doubt and melancholy which must attack a solitary scholar before the recognition of his powers by others, in judgment upon definite work already accomplished, gives him confidence in himself. The publication of his first volumes, from which he apparently did not hope for success, settled his position as an author to be widely and seriously regarded, and he set to work to continue the series with a renewed energy which shows how much he was invigorated by the warm applause he had received. Of his labors in the workshop, however, the letters afford the very slightest glimpses — they are singularly free from the burden of his daily tasks, and, while we might desire to see more of the student at his desk, the fear of egotism seems to have haunted him to such a degree that he spoke of himself and his doings, even to his wife, with an uneasy consciousness, and was always glad to drop the subject. His occasional separation from his family and his long absence from home required him, nevertheless, to give some account of his days, and to this necessity the correspondence is mainly due.

The more entertaining chapters are naturally those which detail, almost like a diary of dinner engagements, his association with leading persons in England, and, more narrowly, upon the Continent. In London society he was received with great cordiality from many, and with courtesy and distinction from all. What was his charm it is impossible to discover from his own account of the matter, and others have not told us; but he must have been singularly agreeable to have won and kept the consideration of the circle in which he moved. He was interested first of all in the eminent literary men and statesmen of the day, and in the group which was noted for kindly disposition to Americans. His portraits of

these people lack condensation and vividness; he was better at describing a character than a personality, and consequently he has not written anything of them specially remarkable. It is rather the tone in which he speaks than the words he uses which exhibits their impression on him. No man is more agreeably presented than the aged Lord Lyndhurst, who at the time of the war wrote to him as a fellow countryman, remembering his birth on American soil; but this characterization is not made in any one passage. Mrs. Norton, too, and Lady William Russell are similarly a part of the pleasure which the letters give, as a picture of humane and hospitable English life, but they are mingled with the various scenes. Thackeray appears as "a colossal infant — smooth, white, shiny ringlety hair (flaxen, alas, with advancing years), a roundish face, with a little dab of a nose upon which it is a perpetual wonder how he keeps his spectacles, a sweet, but rather piping voice, with something of a childish treble about it, and a very tall, slightly stooping figure," and without any distinction in his talk more than in his white choker. Macaulay is a sick man, whenever seen, with the cough which foreboded the end, a blank face, and "as it were badly lighted," nothing luminous in his eyes nor impressive in his brows, a spacious forehead "scooped entirely away in the region where benevolence ought to be, while beyond rise reverence, firmness, and self-esteem like Alps on Alps," while the eyes beneath are almost closed with swollen lids. Motley, who did not wish to talk, did not find him too much an autocrat of the conversation. Brougham, with snow-white and shiny hair, a knobby and bumpy head, furrowed with age, and a vast mouth, is principally remembered by this observer for his incredible nose, which

he wagged like an elephant's proboscis. These, however, are all familiar features, and even "Dizzy," as Mrs. Norton describes him, "with a black velvet coat lined with satin, purple trousers with a gold band running down the outside seam, a scarlet waistcoat, long lace ruffles falling down to the tips of his fingers, white gloves with several brilliant rings outside them, and long black ringlets rippling down his shoulders," would not be strange except for the impossibility that the eye labors under in endeavoring to retain his youthful figure as a thing to be believed in. Of more interest is the sketch of Maximilian just before his departure to Mexico: "About thirty, with an adventurous disposition, some imagination, a turn for poetry," an author "not without talent," who "relieves his prose jog-trot by breaking into a canter of poetry; an adorer of bullfights, who half regrets the Inquisition, and considers the Duke of Alva everything noble and chivalrous, and the most-abused of men." The Comte de Paris is better treated — "a model of what a young prince ought to be in manner, in character, in conversation, in accomplishments. To be sure, he bribed me by his unaffected, sincere, and enthusiastic interest in my country; a more loyal and ardent *American* does not exist than this King's son." Other royal personages are to be seen on the page, always through republican eyes, and usually not to their advantage, except in the case of the frank and straightforward King of Holland and his refined and womanly Queen, always the unassuming friend of the best within her horizon.

To his countrymen, however, the most welcome part of these volumes is not what they tell of the great ones of the earth, or of the social grace and hospitableness of England in its highest circles; but rather the fullness and

clearness with which they reveal the unspoiled American heart which, through long residence in foreign lands and in the midst of aristocratic fascinations, Motley kept beating in his breast. No word can now be breathed against his patriotism or his entire adhesion to and belief in the democracy of his own country. His sketch of Austrian society, in which birth alone gives station, might be expected to contain some comment from one whose chief claim to attention was not diplomacy but literature. He could not be flattered, he says, to be received as a diplomatist when he could not be as a man. In his reflections upon English aristocracy he is not less loyal to the traditions in which he was bred. He acknowledged himself to be a spectator in London, and had no desire to be "one of themselves." After stating the committal of America absolutely to the future of democracy, he goes on to say:

"For me, I like democracy. I don't say it is pretty or genteel or jolly. But it has a reason for existing, and is a fact in America, and is founded in the immutable principle of reason and justice. Aristocracy certainly presents more brilliant social phenomena, more luxurious social enjoyments. Such a system is very cheerful for a few thousand select specimens out of a few hundred millions of the human race. It has been my lot and yours to see how much splendor, how much intellectual and physical refinement, how much enjoyment of the highest character has been created by the English aristocracy; but what a price is paid for it. Think of a human being working all day long, from six in the morning to seven at night, for fifteen or twenty kreutzers a day in Moravia or Bohemia, Ireland or Yorkshire, for forty or fifty years, to die in the workhouse at last! This is the lot of the great majority all over Europe; and yet they are of the same flesh and

blood, the *natural* equals in every way of the Howards and Stanleys, Esterhazys and Liechtensteins."

And again he says:

"I don't think there is any danger of my losing my American feelings and my republican tastes, and I trust I can look on these scenes of exquisite and intelligent luxury objectively, as the Germans say, without confounding the characters of spectator and actor. . . . Much as I can appreciate and enjoy esthetically, sentimentally, and sensuously the infinite charm, refinement, and grace of English life, especially country life, yet I feel too keenly what a fearful price is paid by the English people in order that this splendid aristocracy with their parks and castles, and shootings and fishings and fox-huntings, their stately and unlimited hospitality, their lettered ease and learned leisure, may grow fat, ever to be in danger of finding my judgment corrupted by it. At the same time it is as well not to indulge too long and too copiously in the Circean draughts of English hospitality."

Doubtless he was fortified in his patriotism by the intense passion aroused by the Civil War. In all he has to say of that conflict (and he has very much to say) there is the touch of a burning enthusiasm, of an overflowing interest, of personal anxiety and hope, of a home-felt share in the defeats and triumphs of the country's cause. He had the misfortune to differ from his father upon these topics, and he did not permit himself to speak of them to him; but in his letters to other members of the family he gave full expression to his feelings. He perceived with great definiteness the lines of the conflict, and especially the contest of moral forces and the issues of civilization involved in them. In devoting his life to the story of liberty in the Netherlands he had gone to school at the

fountain; and he was so grounded in the love of the ideas the national cause stood for, as well as in the affection for his own country which life abroad in his case could only intensify, that he was bound, as by a natural law, to throw himself heart and soul into the Northern cause. He was able in consequence to state the question so clearly and forcibly in England as to do great service there, before he returned to this country to be near the scene of affairs; and after his appointment to Vienna he kept in close connection with that body of Englishmen who, with Bright and Mill at their head, befriended our interests.

The episode of his return home in 1861 is one of the capital chapters in the volumes. He represents the scene, the feelings, the confusion of the time, as a part thereof; and whether at Boston or Washington, his pulse tells the beat of the hour. The optimism of the nation at its first awakening is reproduced in him with almost amusing completeness; and throughout the war the readiness with which he recoiled from the depression of defeat, and the vigor of his faith in our triumph, are attractive traits of his character. The anecdote of his finding himself in so oppressive a solitude when he received the news of the fall of Vicksburg is pathetic; he "screeched it through the keyhole" to his daughter; but "you," he says, addressing Dr. Holmes, "who were among people grim and self-contained usually — who, I *trust*, were *falling* on each other's necks in the public streets, and shouting with tears in their eyes and triumph in their hearts — can picture my isolation." This is the contemporary life of those years still warm on the page; and many of these pages are dedicated to the joys and sorrows, public and private, of the time, in a way to deepen regret in our minds at the memory of the unmerited trials which so

true an American heart suffered at the hands of our national Government.

His estimate of the men of the war is also a close rendering of contemporary feeling, especially with regard to the military hope of the hour, Scott or McClellan or Grant. The most interesting of these, however, is the impression he obtained of Lincoln, whom he saw only for a short hour at the opening of the fight. He was struck at once by the substantial characteristics of the President, and, in his case, this was notable; there is nowhere any wonder expressed that a "backwoodsman" had come to so responsible a place, but only gratitude that an honest and true man was at the helm. He writes of him as early as June, 1862, with noticeable accuracy: "I think Mr. Lincoln embodies singularly well the healthy American mind. He revolts at extreme measures, and moves in a steady way to the necessary end. He reads the signs of the times, and will never go faster than the people at his back. So his slowness seems sometimes like hesitation; but I have not a doubt that when the people wills it, he will declare that will." And after the assassination, recurring to his first impression of Lincoln, he writes: "He seemed to have a window in his breast. There was something almost childlike in his absence of guile and affectation of any kind. Of course, on the few occasions when I had the privilege of conversing with him, it was impossible for me to pretend to form an estimate as to his intellectual power, but I was struck with his simple wisdom, his straightforward, unsophisticated common sense. What our republic, what the whole world, has to be grateful for, is that God has endowed our chief magistrate, at such a momentous period of history, with so lofty a moral nature and with so loving and forgiving a disposition."

Perhaps in all these few lines of encomium which from time to time he writes upon the leading figures of the war, we may discern the hero-loving imagination working before the facts were accomplished; but it was Motley's good fortune to have nourished his mind with contemplation of such men in the great struggle of the Netherlands, and he was thus in a position more readily to appreciate them.

It remains to say a word about Motley's friendship with Bismarck, which is a leading topic in the volumes. They were college friends, or even schoolboys, together, and the tie which bound them was this early one cherished through years by both of them. They recognized the vast difference in their political creeds, but they also agreed that the condition of affairs in Prussia and America differed as widely as their views, and their friendship fortunately was so purely personal that opinion did not enter into it as any part of the cement. Bismarck's letters are almost boyish or old-boyish, in spirit, and are half rollicking. They show the Chancellor out of his gravity; but this is only to see him more near. The accounts which Motley furnishes of the household arrangements and private habits of the Bismarcks fill out the picture; and if there is something of the German country baron and of squirearchy in them, this is the homeliness of truth. Bismarck appears in a more amiable and noble light; his sincerity is much dwelt upon, his force and grasp are rather indicated than shown, but the conversation died on the air that heard it. The most valuable passage is the following:

"He said he used when younger to think himself a clever fellow enough, but now he was convinced that nobody had any control over events — that nobody was

really powerful or great; and it made him laugh when he heard himself complimented as wise, foreseeing, and exercising great influence over the world. A man in the situation in which he had been placed was obliged, while outsiders, for example, were speculating whether to-morrow it would be rain or sunshine, to decide promptly, It will rain or it will be fine; and to act accordingly with all the forces at his command. If he guessed right, all the world said, What sagacity — what prophetic power! If wrong, all the old women would have beaten him with broomsticks. If he had learned nothing else, he said he had learned modesty."

It may be said generally — and it is pleasant to be able to say such a thing of a collection of private letters — that this correspondence presents every one whom it brings forward in a way to win regard for him and not to lessen it. The social reminiscences, bare as they often are, are pervaded by hospitable and kindly feelings, and the literary and political portions are without any disagreeable traits, but, on the contrary, show Motley's friendliness and patriotism, and a readiness to take men at the best possible, which now honor his memory. It is, nevertheless, his own reputation that will be increased and endeared by these proofs of his devotion. His belief in his own people, his anxiety to serve them in places of honorable ambition or in private station, and his humane and sanguine temperament in the great conflict of his generation, his laboriousness in his studies, and his unaffected friendliness with many persons of intellect, refinement, and good-will, make us the more glad to know that he remains, after all his disappointments, to the last line of his pen unalienated from ourselves.

BAYARD TAYLOR

It is so much a literary fashion to divide a man's life into periods of development, although they may not in reality differ from Shakespeare's "Seven Ages," that one is often inclined to be impatient with such an exordium. In Bayard Taylor's growth, however, there seem to have been two lives, so marked was the change in his nature; and he has, in fact, left two reputations in consequence — one widespread and established, the other narrow in its range and of doubtful permanence. Out of the still farm life of the Quaker settlement in Chester County, where he was cradled into poetry in the midst of a simple and pure people and under the guardianship of a quiet and cheerful landscape, he came at a very early age into the excitement, the busy triviality, and incessant vicissitude of our earlier journalism; and having made a successful stroke at the start by his first book of travels, he won his way with rapidity and comparative ease to the position of best American reporter of scenes and incidents. This was what he called his service of Mammon, and he said he hated it. But from the first there was a purely literary strain in his blood, a spring of poetic thought in his heart that would not be choked, and an effort of his will toward artistic expression of the best of his spirit. His early friends, the sponsors of his baptism before the muses, were not of the choicest. Rufus Wilmot Griswold was the editor to discover him; but for the youth to whom Griswold was a Maecenas,

the auguries were certainly of doubtful complexion; and when he found his Augustus in the person of the natty Willis, the odds against his making a man of himself were to be counted off only by his innate virtue and the vigor of his mind. It is as good, at least, as one of his own novels to see from his youthful letters how much he prized the first literary society into which he was admitted, the New York coterie of mutual admiration and secret envy, of which here and there in our literary annals some mention may still be found under the name of "the Literati," as they called themselves. Taylor was so far imposed on by it as to write of "that charmed circle of artist and author life, which is the only real life of this world," and he was in middle life before he described it as under-bred, half-refined, and superficially cultivated. Perhaps his travels, by removing him from the danger of constantly breathing this atmosphere, served him better than he knew. However that may have been, it is enough to beget a charitable spirit in one to remember that in his youth journalism was his taskmaster and Willis the high-priest of his cult.

Taylor quickly enlarged his circle through the opportunities of travel and the readiness and freshness of his instincts for fraternity. He made friends with everybody he met, and one might almost say with every creature, even to savage beasts. He enlarged his mind, too, and on returning from his visit to the East he was able to draw to himself an audience distinctly his own. Money flowed in from books, lectures, and successful investments, and he built Cedarcroft and settled down in the expectation that fortune would continue to shower gifts upon him. He was soon to be ready, he thought, to be a poet; he had been making sure of his bread first,

and now he would make sure of his fame. But the war came, and when it was gone there was a new nation, and Taylor found he had outlived his early reputation and had lost his own audience. Trouble in one form or another was at hand. His manor-house on the paternal acres was a millstone round his neck; and finally, after a long struggle of incessant hard work at book-making, he went back to his hack-life on the newspaper from which he was relieved by his appointment as minister to the German court and his speedy death. In the latter part of his career he had translated "Faust" and written long poems, and it was for these works that he cared; for he had learned by experience the ephemeral nature of a traveler's reputation, and he desired most ardently to leave an enduring name. The mass of his writings is very large, but his heart was in his poetry only; the rest was what he called mere pot-boiling literature. In these last years, too, there was an expansion of his intellectual nature and a sharpening of his artistic perception, due in large measure to his study of Goethe, who overmastered his mind and determined the character of the latest products of his genius. It was from the Goethean point of view that he looked down almost contemptuously on the earlier period of his literary activity, and looked forward and up to the future work of his hands, the true work, which was to prolong his memory among men. His death was thus, he would have thought, as truly premature as if he had died in youth. Hope was so strong in him that when past fifty the best of his life seemed still before him.

The most prominent point in the popular conception of Bayard Taylor is that he was a man of great vitality; and, as is frequently the case, the people have seized on

the main characteristic. The activity of his mind was enormous, and it may fairly be said that it was the overflow of physical health in no small degree. But just as he would say that the public did not see that he could not be so good a traveler had he not been a poet, so the vital force that enabled him to grasp and master such masses of work would never have sustained him had he not been buoyed up also by an eagerness of the spirit. The trait his biography reveals on nearly every page, from the days of youthful ardor to those of untiring manhood, is aspiration of the most unflagging and incorruptible kind. Whether Taylor succeeded or not in realizing the fondest wish of his heart, to be known as one of his country's great poets, there is no doubt that he always was working upward to the plane of their life with a high, firm purpose that grew more strong and simple at each turn of his worldly fortune. It was because of this aspiration that the difference between his first and second period has so marked a character as to seem a difference between two lives; he left his youthful environment and all that it contained behind him, and rose out of "the Literati" into literature.

It belongs to this strong aspiration, too, that he was so avaricious of praise, hoarded up his commendations from "the poets," and overvalued their meaning. He was all his days hungry for recognition; he welcomed it from any quarter, and repaid it profusely with his own good-will. It was not vanity that made him listen so keenly for applause; it was not self-conceit that was bred in him by the praise he got; and yet it is not a pleasant characteristic to meet with when one finds the hero so anxious for the roses. It made some people misunderstand and dislike Taylor in his lifetime, and there

is in it certainly some proof that he was without the assurance that goes with matured genius of high order. A discomfortable doubt of his position always haunted him, and this made him prize distinction of an outward kind, and practically look to his friends to mint his coin with their royal approval. The trait of the parvenu, too, is very disagreeably conspicuous in the attitude of his mind toward the great men whom he met, and particularly in his pleasure at being favored by Bismarck and others whose worldly position attracted his respectful admiration. It is said that we all like titles, and perhaps he shared a national weakness; but it would seem rather that this regard for the aristocratic was another phase of his desire to be admitted to an inner circle, as if he were in some way accredited by such an admission.

To meet at once a second questionable trait, he was always self-absorbed, engaged mainly in his own affairs, with a word now and then for others and what they were doing and hoping, but nevertheless, kindly and cordial though he was, essentially preoccupied with his plans and deeds. He was too busy, in fact, to think about other matters than his own; he had no time. Of course he was not lacking in any liberality to his kindred and his friends; he gave what he had — his good-fortune, his hospitality, the favor of his name, the good-will of his heart — everything except his thoughts. For this reason his letters are concerned, more than is usual, with private and temporary details — his new ventures in material or literary affairs, and especially with what he was going to do; for he was more attentive to the future than to the present. Thus one comes about again to what was the leading mark, the saving power of his life

—his irrepressible aspiration, of which his deference to authority and his engrossing interest in the development of himself were, in part, results. It is not necessary to point out how fit such a nature was to imbibe the ideas of Goethe and incorporate them in his own life.

Throughout the latter part of his career Bayard Taylor evidently felt much aggrieved by the fact that the people judged him by his achievements in the lower walk of literature. At first, when his mental horizon was still bounded by a foreign landscape, he was pleased to be known as the most successful traveler of his age, and, if he dipped into poetry, as he could not help doing, he wrote a Californian ballad. But after "the age of sensations and short poems," as he called it, was gone by, and especially after he had translated "Faust," he sent letters to the newspaper for pay only, and occupied himself with the ambition of composing, not epics, to be sure, but a "cosmic poem" — one or more, according to the length of his life, for there was never any question in his own mind that he was inexhaustible. The experience he had acquired in outgrowing the bonds of his early education and breaking away from the formulas of Chester County life, and his observations of the creeds of alien races, with the knowledge thus impressed upon him as to the contingencies of religious dogma, had made a foundation in his mind for a poem of philosophic scope, and he wrote one or two of such a character. They may have been "cosmic," but they were not popular, and since his death they have not grown in esteem. Some of his Arab lyrics will outlive "Prince Deucalion."

Without undertaking to decide whether Taylor's complaint that the people looked on him as a traveler primarily and as a poet only secondarily, was just or not,

one may make one or two observations on his poetic method. He wrote with facility, and his composition was unusually rapid, but the subject, he frequently declares, was for years in his mind slowly taking shape and was at last suddenly developed. He speaks of poems as of other literary work — a newspaper article or a review for example — as if they could be made to order: so many last week, so many to be ready by such a day next month; and similarly of long poems: he will be through at such a date, and there will be so many lines — and this he knows before the draft is completed. These trifles are straws, but they show a good deal; and from them and other hints the impression is left on the mind that Taylor chose his subject first and wrote about it afterward, and the availability of any particular subject from the supply he had always in his mind, was determined by various considerations other than that need for expression which is the only true inspiration. The great poets are more likely to name their verses after they are composed, and to have the substance of thought or passion before they cast about for a heading. Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" is only the "Paradise Regained" of a new age — the lyric for the epic, the Greek for the Jewish, the human for the Puritanic; but the idea, the same Messianic one that "springs eternal in the human breast." Bayard Taylor, on the other hand, apparently thought of a "cosmic poem" first and of what he should say in it afterward. It is also significant that in his later poems he was so much given to symbolism. To a genius of the loftiest order, like Goethe, allegory is merely a mode of expression; the thought is thus conveyed by a symbol, but the thought is far more than the symbol, and is no more contained in it than an ele-

mental force is contained in a single phenomenon. To minds of a lower rank, like Rossetti's, symbolization itself is a mode of thinking rather than of expression; the symbol gives rise to the thought instead of the thought to the symbol. The instrument of poetry is, of course, concrete images in all cases, though not necessarily visual ones; but to poets in whom intellectual power is preëminent, images are a language, while to poets of lower rank the images themselves are the poetry. Many a time in literature we have had rhymesters who strung similes and metaphors, and thought they were producing poems: similarly, since Goethe's time, we have had thinkers, both mystic and scientific, who string symbols and allegories and believe they are composing philosophy in verse.

It would be unjust to say that Taylor was merely one of these latter, but he helps us to understand them. The mode of poetic composition he chose in "Prince Deucalion" was of this kind; it requires the very highest intellectual genius to employ it successfully, and he failed. When he was appointed Minister to Germany he was felt to be the representative of our journalists rather than of our literary men, and the publication of "Prince Deucalion" shortly afterward confirmed the view. This last drama of his life is dwelt on because it marks his line of development, and was one of the mainstays of his hope of immortality in literature. He wrote much better poems when his mind was not filled with such large ambition. But whether his fame shall prove to be transitory, and to rest still on his muscles and pluck and vivacity as when he was thirty years old, the history of his later career is that of a very noble effort to achieve the highest, and together with it a constant and toilsome

fulfilment of the duties of his material life as a man with bread to earn. In outliving the era when reputations were easily won, he entered on a harder career, and bore himself in it in a way to win respect from his successors as largely as he won affection from his contemporaries.

A SHAKESPEAREAN SCHOLAR

RICHARD GRANT WHITE put his hand to the plow in many fields of literature, and in all he showed the sturdiness that denotes yeoman stock. But, apart from his special taste for music, the most of his studies sprang from his love of Shakespeare. In the case of his theatrical and philological writings this is obvious, and in those which illustrate his attachment to England it is fair to ascribe no inconsiderable part to the fondness which, however invigorated and broadened by other traditions, was primarily due to the great dramatist of English history and life. Essays upon words, stage-usages, and matters of music, observations upon our cousins' ways and customs and modes of speech, international satire, and squibs of all kinds and lengths made up a large part of his industrious literary life; but, for all that, Shakespeare was his profession, and the principal work of his hands was editorial. In some respects this choice of employment was felicitous, and fell in with natural intellectual aptitudes. He had a note-taking mind, and his memory was retentive of details to an extraordinary degree — a quality invaluable to an editor of texts; and in addition to this, his clear-headedness, his shrewd sobriety, his content with a plain and honest-seeming meaning, and especially his contempt for the palaver of refining analysts of the German stripe, stood him in such good stead that he holds an honorable place among the students who have made the critical study of Shake-

speare part and parcel of the pride of American scholarship.

The substance of his attainments is to be found, of course, in the various essays, prefatory either to the general work or to the individual plays and poems, which conduce so much to the value of his version of Shakespeare in the way of expansion, criticism, and information; and in these his views are set forth with most modesty, succinctness, and moderation, and his knowledge is deployed with most swiftness and effect. They form, however, only a small portion of his contributions to Shakespeare literature; very much of his labor in his chosen subject was off-hand work, and must be sought in the magazines to which he devoted his less serious moments. Such articles — and their number is legion — usually present some single phase of a Shakespeare theme; and no matter how dry and formal the topic in itself, he makes it entertaining. For it is a distinction of Mr. White's that he always interests; he has the secret of pleasing. His style is wonderfully firm and close-knit; his facts are cold as an iceberg and hard as a flint; and he strews the mental way of his readers with the native nuggets of Yankee sense. His individuality counts for more than all. He was himself a character, in the special meaning of the word; one of those impenetrable pieces of nature's workmanship which are malleable by no external influence of culture, society, or circumstance. Such persons cannot open their lips without some self-exhibition; whether their solitude is of the village or the study, they always speak from within, and echo no man. Mr. White, who was as tenacious of his peculiarities as an Englishman, stamped them upon his writings; and it is due to this that when one

reads his words it is, to an unusual degree, as if one heard him speaking. When a man of this sort has the gift of literary expression, he will be a readable author, whatever deficiencies he may have; and this Mr. White was. Indeed, when one glances over the mass of his minor writing, though it belongs undoubtedly to the literature that springs up and withers in a day, one cannot help wondering at the brightness of its short-lived verdancy. There could hardly seem to be a more thankless task than to make a new paraphrase of Shakespeare's plays. It is true that poets, great and small, have tried to rewrite those dramas, not seeing how deep their words are graved in the living rock of English speech; but to tell their story over in prose — no one would do that except for children. Yet in the half dozen cases in which Mr. White tried his hand at this mode of transcription, he made, if not novelettes, certainly most delightful sketches, which, though every incident and characteristic of them was familiar to us from our childhood, have the unmistakable and un-rubbed newness that belongs to the magazine-mint. These renovations have a use, too, more than to pass an hour of easy reading: they are needed to remind us, who think mostly of the action and thought of Shakespeare's dramas, how much the story counts in the work, and this is best shown by relieving it from its subordination to character and treating it in the novelist's way. The "Tale of the Forest of Arden," for example, as it is retold, might serve as a lesson in romantic fiction, by revealing how poetry is of the essence of it all, not a matter of expression, but of structure. The happiness of Mr. White's renderings of Shakespeare in prose, however, is cited only as a striking instance of his power

over the least promising material. He would strike a shower of wheat out of thrice-threshed straw; or so it seems.

Mr. White selected and revised some of these loose articles. One perceives that Mr. White possessed a hard-and-fast intellect of the sort about which there is, in the favorite phrase, "no nonsense." As a Shakespearean, he was himself, in the bent of his mind, one of the class of American readers which he describes—"so large and so diffused through society that it cannot be rightly called a class, who do not know that there are German critics, who have little acquaintance with any criticism, to whom Schlegel is unrevealed and Coleridge is but a name, and who yet read and understand and love and delight in Shakespeare, and who would quietly smile at the notion that 'at last' we understand Shakespeare because some learned people have said very profound sayings about his revelations of the 'inner life.' " His own appreciation of Shakespeare, though so much more informed, was essentially the same which belongs to the people of home-keeping wits, who read their author in that unenlightened fashion in which the audiences of the Globe listened when the text still knew no recension except that of the pirates. His aim as an editor was to restore, so far as was possible, the conditions of the past; to place the reader in the position of the Elizabethan theater-goer, and leave him to get the original entertainment which Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote. Shakespeare meant to amuse, and in our times it was the part of a loyal adherent of the master to help him in his old purpose. To such a view metaphysics, however acute, was out of place in Shakespeare's demesne; was a perversion of poetry, like the science which

botanizes upon a mother's grave. No words were too sharp, no denunciations too heavy, in Mr. White's opinion, for the flagellation of that school which is no longer confined to German lecture-rooms, but now in all quarters of criticism makes of Shakespeare a problem instead of a poem.

Perhaps in this onslaught Mr. White might have gained by discriminating. The fact is that the dramas do afford a field for such philosophizing, whether rightly or wrongly. It may have been unknown to Shakespeare, but he did write a text-book of human life. By the force of his genius he represented mankind, on its social and spiritual side, with the reality of nature. It is the excellence of his creative art that his characters live, and show their souls not wholly but by glimpses, as common mortals do; and thus Hamlet, for example, presents to us the puzzle that any highly organized man affords to a thoughtful observer, and allows of countless theories in regard to his personality and motives. All life is to the thinker fair game for his meditation, and in it the universal spiritual laws are to be discerned, or guessed at, or speculated about. It would be foolish to object to any amount of philosophizing on the real phenomena of character; and if Shakespeare has given us the microcosmos of man, if the reality of his imagination is not less truthful than that of actual experience, why should not Germans or Englishmen use it, the more readily because it is a common possession, and not, like ordinary instances, known only to the few who happen to be spectators? Mr. White was wrong, if he found fault with the Shakespeare philosophers, or denied their positions, simply because they occupied themselves with material not originally written for such an investigation;

and if he was right at all, it was only in maintaining that Shakespeare knew nothing of this value of his work, and cared nothing for it. Of course there has been much error and feebleness and trash written by the members of this critical school, as is done by incompetence in all departments; but there has been also some wisdom, and it would be gratuitous, if not dangerous, to affirm Shakespeare's ignorance of the worth of his work for instruction. One cannot safely set limits to the knowledge that any great author has of the various meanings which his lines may convey, even if he does not, like Dante, definitely declare that he has expressed a manifold meaning in the same identical words. Wisdom as well as wit often lodges in the ears that hear it as much as on the lips that speak it, and its application to special circumstances frequently discovers hidden truth in the worn words. How many meanings, for example, have Virgil's lines disclosed to those who for centuries have consulted the *Sortes Virgilianæ*! It would be as foolish to credit Virgil with these as with the famous Messianic prophecy in his eclogue. The case illustrates how innocent Shakespeare was of a good part of the exegesis forced upon him by his editors. At the same time it is not likely that they have so exceeded the great master in wisdom that he would be surprised to find that they make of him an understanding author as well as a successful playwright.

The weight of Mr. White's objurgation, however, falls less upon those who comment upon the text and the general conception of the plays than upon those who reason therefrom to the dramatist's life and development. He himself allows the existence of periods of literary art in his author, but in "spiritual stages" he is almost a total

disbeliever. But here, too, one must discriminate, and in much the same way as before. A man grows, but his growth is largely unconscious. The craze to find an "evolution" in all things could not pass by the prime phenomena of genius; and so Shakespeare has been furnished with one. The mistake is in giving too firm lines to the progress of his mind and art. Neither the metaphysical nor the literary yard-stick can be applied to the "myriad-minded" one with any but a ludicrous result; and the scholar who would build up Shakespeare's life in the easy-going fashion of distinct and successive periods is over-confident. The unfolding of his special gift of expression, the apprenticeship and the mastery of art, may be distinguished, from the first smooth-sliding lines to the volcanic fusion of intractable speech in the language of "Cymbeline." So may a similar thing be observed in Browning, or Carlyle, or Tennyson — the mere hand-cunning. And in Shakespeare's temper of mind a change may be observed, plainly enough, in the successive plays, not taken individually, but in their totality. It is the same, essentially, which the great poets exhibit in passing from youth to age; so pathetic in Virgil, so deadly earnest in Dante, so exalted in Milton, so wise in Shakespeare. But to go further than this, and reconstruct the inner life of these men, and especially of him whose gift of taciturnity outrivaled nature's secrecy, is another matter; and for those who do this, and would seem to know Shakespeare better than he knew himself, any one with knowledge of the inner life must have the kind of pity that is akin to contempt. Mr. White had for them unlimited scorn, and poured it forth unceasingly and unsparingly. Those men who assume to know the unsearchable soul of genius, and those who seek to dress

the writer of pleasant comedies and tragical histories as an *avant-courier* of Hegelianism, were-foes to be put to flight with all his critical weapons if he could compass it. He was a partisan in the conflict, but even when going to great lengths he did good work. To free Shakespeare from his commentators is more of a gain than a loss, for, generally speaking, they are of the sort that darkens counsel. It is possible to look upon their explanations of the doctrines of life as unfolded in Shakespeare's plays, and even upon their efforts to reduce his own genius to the familiarity of Rousseau-like autobiography, with a most tolerant spirit; but blessed is he who finds Shakespeare, though he loses them!

But did Mr. White find Shakespeare? Did he succeed any better than the victims of his own censure in forming an ideal Shakespeare out of the materials at hand on the "no nonsense" theory? What was his conception of the man? He lost no opportunity of insisting that the genius we idolize was a popular London playwright, whose aim was immediately to please the spectators and thereby get money. If he wrote a good acting play that would draw an audience and increase the stock dividends of the managers, he had achieved his whole purpose. In this was included his entire notion of the use of the divine art and of his own life. This is the substance of Mr. White's teaching, reiterated almost to weariness. The theory falls in with the common idea that Shakespeare was a kind of Nature's foundling, to whom benevolent fairies had given the great gifts of wisdom, beauty, and fortune as carelessly as if they were shining pebbles, just as fairies used to do in the old story-books. A few surface facts, principal among them the omission to edit and publish his complete works,

give support to the presumed indifference to fame or ignorance of the transcendent worth of his creations on Shakespeare's part, which is involved in the position. There are ready explanations of the facts referred to, such as the nature of theatrical property in those days, and the desirability of not publishing the plays in order to monopolize their acting by his own company. Giving due weight to all that Mr. White urges, it seems to us that it has been as dangerous for him to stop at the surface of Shakespeare's life as it was for the anatomists to probe the center. In attending to his characterization of the man as a money-getter, one is reminded of the ancient science that discovered in humanity a threefold soul, and one thinks that Mr. White may have found one of these in Shakespeare's case, and has forgotten to look for the other two. In fact, it must be confessed that the editor has sometimes shown a weakness of poetic apprehension — that his Shakespeare is rather an observer of life than a poet. This comes out strikingly in his statement, for example, that Shakespeare most withdraws the veil from his own personality in "Troilus and Cressida," and in the character of Ulysses give expression to his own views of life. This drama is indeed packed with noble phrases and fine wisdom, but if one were to seek for Shakespeare in it, it would better be in the impatience, the undisguised contempt, that the author shows for these wars about the Grecian jade; nor is there more reason to ascribe any special earnestness or directness to the words of the dialogue than in the case of any other of the dramas that allow frequent opportunity for the utterance of universal truths in respect to man's nature or life. Mr. White's use of the play is merely to emphasize his notion that Shakespeare was a

man of the world exclusively, or at least primarily. This is a cardinal trait of the editor's Shakespeareanism. There is little need for argument. The many phrases of the sonnets which prophesy immortality for the verse are not to be set aside as merely customary at the time, or as applicable only to the more pretentious work (as Mr. White thinks) of the poet as distinct from the dramatist; they have the ring of sincerity too clear for that, the stamp of the *mens conscia virtutis* which converts a boast into the just superscription of Caesar. But apart from all these minor matters of evidence, the world will never believe that the man who knew human life more widely and profoundly than any other mere mortal that ever wrote was ignorant only of himself; or that, with such acquaintance with the noble and ideal ends of life, he contented himself with that one of avarice or of getting on in the world which is held to be among the meanest and most paltry, and which is usually debasing to the higher faculties. Had he been so furnished with insight, imagination, and ideality as he was, so complete in earthly wisdom and so apprehensive of the excellence of human virtue, and had he, notwithstanding, declined to the level of those who care for their gifts and works only as means of merchandise, he would have been a monstrosity so strange that nature could scarce contain his deformities. This is instinctively felt by those whose thoughts keep proportion. In this matter Mr. White exhibited most plainly the limitation of his mind. The truth which gives any color to his characterization of Shakespeare may easily be granted, as that he was always mindful of his audience's taste, of stage traditions, of the actual conditions under which he practised his art, and that he made money

by his work and was glad to have it, and that he valued social rank and position. The error lies in affirming that this is the whole story; in ignoring the poetic nature, the most self-conscious of all the varieties of temperament; and in passing by all that indicates Shakespeare's regard for his art, even in the chance ways possible, such as his repeated criticism on the abuses of the stage and his great reform in the disposition made of the Fool. In these last it was not the theatrical manager, but the outraged poet, who spoke; his impatient contempt for the laughter of the pit and the rant of the stage, though he yielded to them as much as was needful, is the obverse of his love for his art and the value he set upon it. But these hints in regard to the qualities involved in the mere existence of such creative genius, and expressly shown in random flashes of his work, are almost superfluous. Because Shakespeare submitted in his art and worldly life to the conditions imposed on him by fortune, and made that submission the most marvelous triumph of all literature, is not a reason for affirming that he gave his assent to these conditions; and unless he did so with all his soul, the theory that he cared for nothing except to get rich by catering to the apprentices must fall to the ground. We must stop this side of Mr. White's furthest mark, therefore, and admit only that Shakespeare had the wisdom, as a literary workman, to take the times as he found them and reduce them to the purposes of great art; and that, Heaven be thanked, he was paid for his laborious industry, and left money to pay his debts and provide for his children.

To parody the literary proverb, one might say that the defects of Mr. White's Shakespeareanism produced its qualities. In a field so large and various, it may be a

working advantage to have limitations of outlook and effort, and to take short views. The editor who has once satisfied himself, as did Mr. White, that to build spiritual biography was foolishness and to philosophize about the inner life was futile has greatly simplified his task; and if to this he adds the positive idea that Shakespeare's vision was bounded by the circuit of the London theater, he may well rest contented with the aim of merely restoring the past conditions, and so providing his readers with notes that they can mingle with the crowd at the Globe as with contemporaries. Within these self-imposed bounds the gifts of Mr. White were put to admirable use. In the mere matter of the vocabulary, in elucidating or restoring meanings to words, he was a well-informed and trustworthy guide; and how large a portion of his study was philological does not need to be pointed out. Perhaps a more important, because rarer, service was his reconstruction of the original acting, the *mise-en-scène*, in which his knowledge of the stage was an efficient aid to his scholarship and insight. He laments the break in the theatrical tradition occasioned by the closing of the theaters under the Commonwealth, because it probably deprived us of Shakespeare's own conception of how the characters should be represented; but his essays upon the acting of Rosalind and of Iago, for example, do more to set the Elizabethan interpretation of the plays before us than anything else with which we are acquainted. In fact, Mr. White's frequent criticism on modern impersonations of Shakespeare's characters, by showing how far removed they are from the author's intention, makes a part of his most instructive writings.

Besides the linguistic and the theatrical strands in

the more valuable portion of his work, something is to be said for the critical element in the department of characterization. It was here that the editor was strongest. The conception of Iago which he develops is as finely reasoned an essay as can be found in the field, and his restoration of Jaques from a melodramatic fool into his original sour cynicism is a piece of retributive justice too long delayed. One has a special gratitude for his penetration into the noble nature of Cassio, who has met with little understanding hitherto, and for the clear and sympathetic discovery of it to his readers. It is when Mr. White applies himself to these subjects that he shows the most valuable individual qualities, and merits honor. They belong, however, to the detailed rather than the general criticism of Shakespeare. In scholarship he was, perhaps, lacking in breadth, and in more than one instance, as in his discussion of the text of the two quartos of "Hamlet," he argues beside the point in dispute. Notwithstanding these things, the real value of Mr. White's Shakespeareanism is not impaired. The literary form and charm of his style, the hard-headedness of his mind, the practical sense he always displays, make his work, within the limitations which he himself assigned it, of great positive utility; and the sturdiness with which he stood for common sense, in opposition to the eulogistic gush with which Shakespeare, in common with all the greatest poets, is overwhelmed, is something to be very grateful for. He had his pet notions, as who has not? and he was a hard hitter — "Let the galled jade wince!" But he spent his life with his favorite author, and made of him his liberal education; would that the universities afforded so good a one! His labor was one of love, and it has the value and respect

of the best work a man can do, being deficient only where Nature herself had denied faculty, in this case on the poetic side. He has gone over to the shelves of the "great majority" of acknowledged commentators, beneath the Stratford bust, and with him go the plaudits of true lovers of Shakespeare for such lifelong and honest service to the god of our literary idolatry.

It is but just to add a few words of acknowledgment for the vigor and brightness shown by Mr. White in his work in other fields. His versatility, information, and industry were very great. He was essentially a *littérateur* rather than an author. The keen observant power of his view of English life and manners was really marvelous, when one considers his comparatively short residence — or more properly speaking, vacation — in the mother country; and his knowledge of England, as shown in other volumes than those of travel, appears as intimate as a native's. He possessed, beside this ready apprehension of facts and insight into human nature, some of the qualities of the transplanted stock from which he sprang, and showed them in the patience and frugal independence of a self-respecting life, which may well serve as a lesson in simplicity and dignity to the rapidly increasing class of writers who make minor literature their profession. The lack of tolerance which he sometimes exhibited was not that of an unamiable but of a strong nature; and the insistence on some opinions which he seems to have regarded as his private property was the common foible of students. On the other hand, genuine heartiness and an inbred courtesy may be easily discerned beneath his literary exterior.

COLONIAL BOOKS

THE first three volumes of Stedman's "Library of American Literature" cover the colonial and revolutionary times down to the adoption of the Constitution. It may seem surprising that three large quarto volumes were required to hold what is worth preservation in a period usually regarded as barren, in a literary sense; but the editors interpreted the term "literature" in a liberal way, and meant to present in this collection a view of the intellectual life in the colonies, and later in the States of the Union, without too strict a regard to that quality of form and style which makes literature classic. The colonial writings are for the most part interesting on historical grounds: they consist of chronicles, diaries of adventure, and all kinds of sermonizing; and undoubtedly, as a whole, they are very tedious, more fit for the leisure of our state historical societies in their proceedings than for general reading. The impression that there is so little of real value in the colonial literature that it is not worth while to search for it is widespread; and in a certain sense this is true. In those days literature was not practiced as a fine art in this country. The books that were written, however, came very near to the real life of the people, reflected their thoughts and their doings with truthfulness, if not with beauty, and constitute the record of the settlement. Literature was at all events a practical art. There was as much life in sermons then as there is in newspapers now; and in the

tragedies of the wilderness, in shipwreck, Indian battle, and pirate-hunting, in Quakerism and witchcraft, there was that union of romance and reality which gives to history the liveliness of fiction. One who is unacquainted with the stores of our historical societies would turn these pages with surprise at their riches. The first volume is the American Hakluyt. Here is a chapter out of that voyaging which was opening the whole western world, and to us the most interesting of all, because it contains the adventures of the American coast; it is read, too, as it came from the lips of the men who were themselves chief actors in the scene, direct in speech as they were sturdy in deed. There is no art in the saying of their words, but the pulse of the action is still to be felt in their narratives; the story is yet warm with memory of joys and sorrows, the *ipsissima verba* of castaways rescued against hope. One who would obtain a vivid impression of what planting the wilderness was could not do better than read these pages, in which admirable selection has brought together the best of these living narratives; and as he continues, he will find the entire life of the colonies, their hopes, beliefs, and customs, their perils and their deliverances, opening under his view. The collection in the first three volumes is an illustration, better than any history, of the first hundred and fifty years of English life on this continent.

A considerable part of the material is necessarily familiar, inasmuch as the more important events in history and the more striking incidents in personal adventure are natural subjects for editorial selection; but these are told from the original sources. It is unavoidable, too, that the colonies of Virginia and of New England, especially the latter, should occupy a disproportionate

place, because their inhabitants left more written records of themselves and came more into the ken of travelers. Intellectual life was more vigorous among the Puritans of the Bay than elsewhere, and the whole social system felt its stimulus. From the other parts of the country comes little else than descriptions of places, anecdotes of warfare, and a few characterizations of men, together with the famous shipwreck of Sir Thomas Gates off the Bermudas, and the dolorous narrative of Colonel Norwood's voyage and sufferings in Virginia, which is as fine a story of adventure as the chronicles contain, and is told in a manner to delight Kingsley or Thackeray. One gets also, a glimpse of the Southern pirates, but no more. Similarly, the collection affords only a slight account of New York, a bird's-eye view of the trading village, and a glance at its city politics, disturbed even at that early day. It is New England that furnishes the bulk of the matter which has come down to us, from the internal troubles of the Leyden church, the landing at Plymouth, the coming of Endicott, Morton of Merry-mount, the hiding of the king's judges, down through Quakerism and witchcraft, French and Indian wars, to the defiance of Adams and Otis. This was a most interesting period, with changes and incidents in plenty, with solid characters for counsel and action, and with one of the most remarkable communities of the world to mold and develop. The editor's skill in so choosing extracts from the mass of forgotten writings as to place before us the traits of the people is a very fortunate gift. It is especially matter for congratulation that he has taken from the ecclesiastical record so many characterizations of the leading Puritan ministers, such as Hooker, Shepard, Cotton, Eliot, the Mathers, and also of some

of their wives. Of the theology of the time, he gives no more of the blazing kind than is needful to a full idea of the sermons of the divines, while of other extracts there are enough to show that if the people thought much upon the wrath to come, they also sought pious and godly living. Perhaps the most curious theological examples are the denunciations launched by the Quakers at Endicott and his fellows, in the style of the Hebrew prophets: "Woe, woe to thee, thou bloody town of Boston, and the rest that are confederate with thee, and it thou canst not escape — thou who hast shed the blood of the innocent people called Quakers, and imprisoned and fined them, and taken away their goods, and they have become a prey unto thee, for thee to exercise thy cruelty upon them; and thou boasts in thy wickedness, and 'thinks thou dost God good service to brand and put to death' the people called Quakers. Verily this is the thoughts and intents of the hearts of many of you in New England; but especially within thee, and within thy jurisdiction that belongs to thee, O thou town of Boston!" Of this kind of jeremiad there is a considerable amount, but the extract is interesting as an example of that command of Biblical style to which much of the earlier volumes owe what literary merit they contain. The Scripture, from the time that the Bible was a new book in England, was almost an English dialect; and in these divines of New England one sees how invigorating it was. Undoubtedly it encouraged the exhortatory style of harangue, but it gave force to the utterance of the mind, and from a literary point of view great influence is to be ascribed to it. Wherever the style rises and becomes fervid, one easily perceives the study of the Bible; intellectual passion, high feeling of all kinds, took on this

Scriptural expression; it was the poetry, the highest form of impassioned speech, of the period. Even in descriptions one sees its dominating influence. It is not the mosaic of Biblical words that is referred to, but the very spirit of the orator who pours them forth. Here is an admirable instance of the manner of it; and a more vigorous picture of battle, one more abundant in the ancient English force, could hardly be found. It is from the pen of William Hooke.

“Here ride some dead men swagging in their deep saddles; there fall others alive upon their dead horses; death sends a message to those from the mouth of the muskets; these it talks with face to face, and stabs them in the fifth rib. In yonder file there is a man hath his arms struck off from his shoulder, another by him hath lost his leg; here stands a soldier with half a face, there fights another upon his stumps, and at once both kills and is killed; not far off lies a company wallowing in their sweat and gore; such a man whilst he chargeth his musket is discharged of his life, and falls upon his dead fellow. Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. Death reigns in the field, and is sure to have the day, which side soever falls. In the mean while (O formidable!) the infernal fiends follow the camp to catch after the souls of rude nefarious soldiers (such as are commonly men of that calling), who fight themselves fearlessly into the mouth of hell for revenge, a booty, or a little revenue. How thick and threefold do they speed one another to destruction! A day of battle is a day of harvest for the devil.”

Such an extract is sufficient to show that these pages are not without masterly style. It is interesting to ob-

serve, too, in these theological portions the efforts of the imaginative faculties of the mind to make themselves felt, in parable and fancied dialogue, and here and there one comes on that not unfrequent union of the actor and the preacher which was offensive to the usually grave and serious ways of the Puritan pulpit. There was one preacher who enacted Christ's agony and impersonated God dropping sinners into the pit. Perhaps long discourses encouraged such sporadic attempts at variety.

Outside of this infusion of the noble language of Scripture into style, there is little for the literary critic to notice. In the minds of the writers one perceives no great distinction, no remarkable individual gifts. It is plain that piety and strength of character must have sustained intellectual power in these leaders of the community. Jonathan Edwards was the sole example of a mind of the first order in the colonies, and his metaphysical analysis and closeness of logic stand by themselves, apart from all else in the collection; for though Bishop Berkeley is included as a contributor to American literature, and some pages of Berkeleyism are interpolated, the mind refuses to regard him as other than an Englishman of the mother country. John Norton, also, occupies a solitary niche, with his style deeply imbued with classical example and studded with the names and maxims of the ancients. He alone shows the powerful influence of the old collegiate learning; nor did he emulate the example of Cotton, whom he eulogizes as "savoring more of the cross of Christ than of human learning." In him alone are those mingled strains of pagan learning and Puritanism which were most happily blended in Milton. The other noted ministers of the early colonists have a family resemblance, and

their memory, as here shown, exemplifies the common ideal of the "godly men" who planted the church in the new soil.

In the broad view which such a collection as this gives, one trait in the public spirit of the colonists stands out prominently with equal eminence in both the lay and clerical authors, in New England and in Virginia. There were carpers, of course, restless spirits, adventurers of all sorts, who had fault to find, who felt irked by restraint, and would have produced some Gonzalo's commonwealth. But, commonly speaking, they looked upon this country, this wilderness as they called it, as a paradise, a land of promise and plenty, where the poor people of the Old World could begin life anew. The terms in which they describe the fertility of the land, the excellence of the climate, the speed with which comfort was obtained, all the advantages of material prosperity, are identical with those now associated in our minds with the new West. Kansas and Nebraska were not praised more in their day, nor was the opportunity the West offers for the poor to build homes of plenty more persistently and glowingly put forth than is the lot of the planter and the colonist subject for congratulation in many of these extracts. It is true there were Indians, but, generally speaking, the Indians were kind friends to the first comers; there were shipwrecks, such as that marvelous one of Thacher and Avery on their August voyage from Ipswich to Marblehead, which gave the name to Thacher's Island, but such perils were exceptional. The well-being of the people at large was greater than in the mother country; they were full of hope and energy, and rapidly developed that versatility in expedients and keenness in acquiring wealth which were to

be the great traits of their descendants. They prized, too, from an early date, their liberties. These were never left unmentioned in the enumeration of their blessings. Nor was it many years before they were proud of their achievements, like a Western community; only that they were more prone to see the hand of God in it, and to look on themselves as God's people, of whom he had a special care. This was true more particularly of New England. The heresies that arose among them are a proof of the free action of their minds. The persecution of the dissenters, of Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams, and the delusion of the Salem witchcraft have been made much of; but however lamentable these seem now, in a different age and a more settled society, they were then looked on as religious disorders of the same nature, relative to the commonwealth, as were the doings of Morton at Merrymount in a secular way. The Puritans believed in government, and had the English sense for it, and they valued their liberties likewise in an English temper. When the most has been charged against them, there remains the state they founded, with the public spirit that grew up with it; and the fact that from the first they nursed this high hope of their fortunes, looked on the land as their own and believed in it, and regarded their prosperity in a free condition as God's dealing with them was one fundamental ground underlying the entire revolutionary period. The Revolution was ingrained in them by their birth as citizens of the New World.

This is one reason why in the third volume of the work there is no break in the continuity of the Puritan spirit. A new political question had arisen, and men in secular life were called to the front by it, but the tem-

perament of the people as expressed in the new voices was the same. Society had grown more varied, and commerce and law were coming into rivalry with the pulpit; yet the mental tone is still one of sobriety, dignity, and a fervor which did not pass into unreason. At the beginning of this volume stands Franklin, and nearly all the men of the Revolution appear before the end is reached. The change that is noticed is a great one. One feels that the colonies, in obtaining independence, have passed into the state of a true nation. Washington's "Farewell Address" is here, and more than the "Declaration" itself, which is also here, those words of Washington signal a new era. Jefferson, Adams, Madison, Patrick Henry's famous speech, Paine, and Otis admonish the reader that the question is no longer of sea or land adventures, of Berkeley's or Edwards's theories, of Cambridge or Saybrook platforms, but of those broad matters which concern the founding of a stable state. This volume is necessarily largely political, and yet the selection here has also been excellently made, and the nature of the contents lightened by introducing many letters of our public men. Even here one does not come into the view of literature, in the ordinary sense. The editor has done his best by the poets and poetesses, but without any success in restoring to them any of their contemporary luster, such as it was. In the earlier volumes there were a few verses, all that could possibly be called into service; in this volume there are many, and those which illustrate the popular songs of the Revolution well deserve such remembrance as is given them; but even with Freneau, the first name which yet retains a lingering reputation in the world, he cannot persuade us that Poetry had yet come to the shores which

Berkeley and Herbert had prophesied should be her chosen seat. There is only one copy of verses, by a youth who died at twenty-two, and left this pathetic waif of pleasantry behind him, which has a spark of nature in it, and with it the volume ends.

These volumes are an excellent and convenient résumé of all writings which by a liberal use of the word can be called American, for the first century and a half after the settlement. The extracts afford a complete and abundant view of this literature in travel, history, anecdote, theology, politics, and versifying; and the passages chosen are such as illustrate in the most instructive and entertaining way the habits and customs, the modes of thought, the lives, and the public spirit of the people, so far as any record of them survives. Many of the originals from which these extracts are made are rare or difficult of access, and many of them also are such that even a patient reader would never hunt out their contents. The editor claims that the "first two volumes contain a more select and compact representation of the writings of our colonial divines than has before been attempted." Certainly these two volumes serve the purpose of exhibiting the general character of the Puritan mind in New England admirably, and the justice with which a somewhat delicate task has been discharged is notable. There are few persons whom it is easier to misrepresent than those divines of the old stock; but as they are illustrated here by their own words, they really seem to live and speak in their proper persons. As much can be said, too, for the sufficiency of the tales of personal adventure, of Indian warfare, and of the disturbers of the colonies. In the third volume, which summarizes the growth and progress of the ideas of the Revolution

and contains its greatest state papers, one feels that only a part of that large mass of admirable political speech and discussion is given; but the best of it has been included, and so as to reflect in a lively way the times and the men.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

THE novels of Charles Brockden Brown possess only an historical interest. He was the first to write American fiction, and his works had the good fortune to please in London before the time of Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott; he came, too, in the period after Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis, and had his genius been stronger he might have had the distinction of being remembered as the representative of the change of the novel from the wildly romantic into a more natural type. He stands just at that point of development, but he had not force or character enough to rise to a position in literature which should command attention beyond his own generation. He was born in Philadelphia. With an original taste for letters, a vigorous imagination, and a wide curiosity for knowledge of all kinds, a literary profession was inevitable. He tried his hand at law, but abandoned the study after a brief experience of it, and gave his mind to the moral and political speculation then rife, to the manners and customs of nations, to history, and to the individuals whom he created in imagination, and sent on their travels. He wrote several novels, and left fragments of others. His political pamphlets, and the "European and American Annals" which he wrote for the American Register from 1806 to 1809, are of solid worth, but are not included in his works. He died in 1810, at the age of thirty-nine.

This short biography is all the preface needed by one

who reads his writings, and it might easily be dispensed with. It is not his life, which was not remarkable, but his position, that throws light upon his novels. He was in his time a reforming novelist. For one thing, he thought it was the part of an American to use those "sources of amusement to the fancy and instruction to the heart that are peculiar to ourselves," and which he declares "are equally numerous and inexhaustible." He announced his purpose "to profit by some of these sources," and in "Edgar Huntley" he tried to "exhibit a series of adventures growing out of the condition of our country, and connected with one of the most common and wonderful diseases or affections of the human frame." Here we have the two characteristics which are aimed at now by every tyro, truth in local color and in the facts of science. That he understood himself to be an innovator may be easily gathered from his frank assertion of his "one merit — that of calling forth the passion and engaging the sympathy of the reader by means hitherto unemployed by preceding authors. Puerile superstition and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras, are the materials usually employed for this end." He for his part was going to deal with facts. He was, in a word, a realist. But who would have guessed it, if he had not published the notice in his preface? To what "facts" did he have recourse to exterminate and supplant those "Gothic castles and chimeras" with which Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis, in the van of good Sir Walter, had occupied the ground of romance? To what field of the conflict, to what stage of the comedy, would he direct attention, that his readers might no more be cheated and fooled with entertainment afforded by "puerile superstition and exploded manners"?

Why, ventriloquism, and sleep-walking, and the wild red Indian! There is something humorous in this issue of the first realistic reformer, for one cannot doubt that he took himself seriously. To a later generation, Brown's heroes and heroines are very far from any humanity that rides in our street-cars; they seem little more credible than the Nun and the Gallant they were to do away with; his tales are wildly improbable, more impossible than ghosts by as much as one lays aside incredulity in reading of "Gothic castles." The realist of to-day must peruse these novels with much mirth, if he judges them by the style of to-day in men, and things, and fiction.

It is hardly possible to give a true impression of the general character of Brown's six novels to one who has not read one or two of them, at least. They are without unity of design; there are several stories which interweave with one another in the same tale, but they are not correlated among themselves; the main narrative is not so much broken by episodes, but rather is itself a succession of slightly connected events and different family histories; the method, generally speaking, is like that of the novel of adventure, in which it is not the dramatic plot, but the exciting stages of a much-checked career, that holds the attention. The better ones of the series, "Wieland," "Arthur Mervyn," and "Edgar Huntley," have some special feature, it is true. In one the mystery of the story is in ventriloquism, in another somnambulism; and the idea of supplanting supernatural by physical and quasi-scientific mystery was an original and useful one, fruitful still in our own days. In others the scenes of the yellow-fever epidemic in New York and Philadelphia, of which Brown had

himself been a witness, afford the realistic element, and these are much the best done of anything from his pen; but here, too, it is to be observed that he discarded the supernatural only to hold fast to the exceptional. In the sphere of character and action he was still under the shadow of the old castle; the spectacular has given place to the sensational, but in the bosoms of Constantia and Jane, of Wieland and Ormond and Sarsefield, reigns the very breath of romantic passion, and adventure is the genius of their careers. As for the language in which they address one another, it was never heard off the stage of melodrama; they enter and strike attitudes and have their say; one would as soon think of interrupting a set piece of fireworks as their speeches. The style, too, is, beyond concealment, tedious. The truth is, these novels are as much gone by as the Algerian pirates, with whom they were contemporary; even Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis have kept better pace with the modern reader than has Brown.

Yet, historically, he is curiously interesting. His pages reflect both a state of mind and a mood of imagination in which he shared only as a member of a larger world of men, some of whom were destined to a better fortune. It is not only the literary reformer who is found in the gallery of forgotten things; the portrait of the social innovator is as commonly to be met with there; and in Brown we find the stamp and impress of one of the most noted in his day and most obscure in ours — the philosopher William Godwin. Brown was familiar with his writings, as not long ago young men were with John Stuart Mill's. One reads between the lines in these tales the theory and maxims and speculation to which Godwin gave currency. In "Jane Talbot," the hero of

the story is the typical young man with dangerous ideas — or he has that reputation in the ears of the world, and particularly of the mother of the young lady he would marry. Here is a sketch of the abandoned youth of the first days of the century.

“A most fascinating book fell at length into his hands, which changed in a moment the whole course of his ideas. What he had before regarded with reluctance and terror, this book taught him to admire and love. The writer has the art of the grand deceiver — the fatal art of carrying the worst poison under the name and appearance of wholesome food; of disguising all that is impious, or blasphemous, or licentious, under the guise and sanctions of virtue. Colden had lived before this without examination or inquiry. His heart, his inclination, was perhaps on the side of religion and true virtue; but this book carried all his inclination, his zeal, and his enthusiasm over to the adversary; and so strangely had he been perverted that he held himself bound, he conceived it to be his duty, to vindicate in private and public, to preach with vehemence, his new faith. The rage for making converts seized him.”

In this strain the mother writes to her daughter of Godwin’s “Political Justice.” The vigor of his influence must have been considerable in the community, his name must have been a standing target in society, when he was invoked by a novelist to create the character of such a man as Colden, even by rumor; and the fact that Colden is a blameless person, quite in the style of the virtuous and rather colorless philanthropist, which was then one of the ideals set up for youth, ought perhaps to indicate that Brown himself, who had speculated on the forbidden topic of the marriage relation, was not unscathed by the

malign influence, though his character remained unharmed. As reminiscences, in imaginative literature, of the philosophizing temper of the year 1800, all such passages are worth remark.

There is, too, in the novels a pervading conception of man as a creature of dark passions, which, had Brown written a score of years later, would have been called Byronic. Byron did not so much invent Byronism as clothe this type of passion with a power and lift it to a height that made it his own creation in literature; and it happened fortunately for his fame that he in his own person embodied it for the imagination of his contemporaries. But premonitions of Byronism, and even incomplete prototypes of it, are to be found before his day; and in Brown's novels there are several such passages." Take this characterization: —

"A youth of eighteen, a volunteer in a Russian army encamped in Bessarabia, made prey of a Tartar girl, found in the field of a recent battle. Conducting her to his quarters, he met a friend, who, on some pretense, claimed the victim. From angry words they betook themselves to swords. A combat ensued, in which the first claimant ran his antagonist through the body. He then bore his prize unmolested away, and, having exercised brutality of one kind upon the helpless victim, stabbed her to the heart, as an offering to the *manes* of Sarsefield, the friend whom he had slain. Next morning, willing more signally to expiate his guilt, he rushed alone upon a troop of Turkish foragers, and brought away five heads, suspended by their gory locks to his horse's mane. These he threw upon the grave of Sarsefield, and conceived himself fully to have expiated yesterday's offense. In reward for his prowess, the general gave him a

commission in the Cossack troops. This youth was Ormond."

Crude, brutal, coarsely laid on, it is; but Ormond — and we may say that his later career was all of a piece with this trifling anecdote of his teens — is essentially an earlier Lara. The entire atmosphere of "Ormond," which is a novel of violent passion and detestable wickedness, is pre-Byronic; and Brown's imagination, or his note-book from historical reading, was inexhaustibly fertile of the sort of incident instanced by the quotation above. The despised masters and mistresses of "puerile superstition" did not sup on horrors in more courses.

It is not with Byron, however, but with Shelley, that Brown's name is lastingly associated. Shelley, whose own early romances in the German style remain to bear witness to his first taste in fiction had just the right opinions and emotions to live in sympathizing imagination the lives of some of Brown's heroes, for at some points they touched his own career nearly. That passage which draws Colden's character, already quoted, might have been actually written of Shelley by some of his family detractors; he might have sat for the portrait of Colden as the latter is represented by his friends, also. More than once, in the other novels, one comes on sentiments, personal situations, and ideals of conduct through which one feels at once, if he is on the watch, the pulse of Shelley beating as he reads. For example, it is one of Brown's distinctions that his pages are devoted, whenever they touch on female character, to the advocacy of the right of woman to equal education, and to a position of equal dignity intellectually, with man. Brown appears to have been familiar with Mary Wollstonecraft's writings on the subject, and to have adopted her views

so far, at least, as the mental training of woman is concerned. The reiteration of this doctrine, both openly in the author's discourse, and indirectly in the conversation of the characters, was enough of itself to win Shelley's adherence. On the imaginative side, Brown touched him also in the marrow; for Shelley's temperament, being extravagantly romantic in his nonage, was the local habitation in which Ormonds and Sarsefields and their tribe thrive. Ventriloquism and somnambulism, in their turn, were the kind of science Shelley studied; he perhaps pursued chemistry as much with the hope of raising a ghost as from any other motive; science to him was only another form of that marvel which he first found in the supernatural. In the poet's works, perhaps the name Constantia, in the lyric "To Constantia Singing," was taken from the novel of "Ormond"; but further than that nothing is traceable.

These are the principal points of Brown's historical interest. As a precursor of Cooper, or Hawthorne, or Poe, a position that has been claimed for him, he cannot be regarded; the analogy between their works and his is of the slightest. He was a romancer of the old kind, although he made efforts in the direction of realism; he has no art; he is awkward, long-winded, and melodramatic, interested almost wholly in adventure, and save for the accident of coming first and being a Philadelphian would be without note.

LUCY LARCOM

A MEMORIAL ADDRESS BEFORE THE BEVERLY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE memory of Lucy Larcom extends beyond her village-borders, and is familiar in many families of her own country as well as in some English homes. It was her fortune to touch many lives, and the touch was not easily to be forgotten. As a teacher, she had personal power; as a writer, she had companionableness; and, in the closer relations of life, especially in friendship, she exercised that intimate influence which is a peculiar gift and belongs to temperament. The recognition she received was, for these reasons, largely personal and friendly, and it was natural that upon her death, those who valued her as a part of their own lives, should gather, as they did in one and another place, to hold memorial services; but it belongs to our own community, of which she made one, to give in a marked way public tribute to her life and work, and to say that parting word of honor which is due on the cessation of such a life, now finished, as it was lived, in our midst. Of that life on its more personal side I leave her biographer to speak; to us, who were her neighbors, her personality was near and close; but to others she was an author; and for them, who are the greater number, her memory must abide mainly in her books; and it is with these — their character and meaning — that it falls to me to deal, seeking thus to show

more clearly the value of her life, the nature of her work, and the influence that now survives after her labor is done.

Literature, in its pure form, is nothing but expression — the expression of life; in proportion as a writer's experience embraces that of his own community, his people and country, what he writes becomes the expression of the common life of all, and is therefore of interest to all; and so, in ever widening scope, as the horizons of knowledge and sympathy extend, literature becomes the voice of a community, a nation, or, in the greatest instances, of mankind. Lucy Larcom was not in this sense a great writer, but she gave utterance to the common feelings and thoughts, and especially the habitual ideals of the people among whom she was reared; and, in a peculiar way, she expressed New England womanhood, and, in her own person, stood for it, as one of its strong and characteristic types. She wrote, so to speak, from the soil in which she was rooted, — from the things she saw, heard and felt, just as others about her might do, out of her own sensations and emotions, out of her own life. Whoever has read her verses in connection with her "New England Girlhood," must have observed how many of her poems were memories of childhood in the town whose child-world she describes. Here she was born and grew up, differing from her companions, perhaps, by a greater openness to the world without, and by a more thoughtful intimacy with the world within, and especially by having the native gift to write. She had the same education as others; and the round of her days was that of the whole village, lying drowsily, as she describes it, between the ocean and the river, with storms in winter and flowers in summer, and no events except the arrival

of the stage, the home-coming of the seafaring people, and the weekly sermon. It was a child's world that she thus remembered; but there were elements in it that sank, deep as life, into her being, that mastered her will, and entered, as an inward spirit, into her hopes and labors. There the needle was magnetized and the pole of her life determined while, unaware, she noticed only the tides washing in, the ebb and flow of the seasons of the year, and the aged faces about her. From what secret of birth or by what cunning of nature the poetic impulse has its source, none can tell; but it is easy to discern upon what it is nourished, and there were about her girlhood elements sufficient to wake the germ and sustain its life; and these, as rarely happens, were to be continuous in her thoughts and feelings.

In Lucy Larcom's verse there were three such principles, formative and supporting, which governed her from the beginning of her conscious life. The first was the power of the sea. It has been long observed that the poetry of the world has been made by the great sea nations, Greece, Italy and England, and there is something in the ocean more, perhaps, than in any other great natural feature that stirs the imagination and generates these vague moods that belong to the poetic temperament. But without going too far to find what lies near at hand, it is plain that the ocean brought to the girlhood of Lucy Larcom the first impression of the changeful beauty and vast power of nature, the first horizon of romantic and dreamy suggestion, and the first touch of mysterious fate. The lives of the people were blended with it, and the town took color and character from it. She herself speaks of the waifs and strays of foreign lands that gave picturesqueness to the streets, of the

voyages always on the lips of the living, and of the watching and waiting in the homes along the road and the lanes — “hardly a house but had its sorrow of one who went and came not back.” It was the same experience that Longfellow recalled from his boyhood farther down the coast:—

“I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free,
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.”

And she saw it always, gleaming and restless and voiceful — and she dreaded it. There is no love for the sea in her poems. The two best-known, the companion pieces, “Hannah” and “Skipper Ben,” are sea-tragedies. The best single poem, as I think, — at least of this class — “A Sea Glimpse” — is a land-piece, in which the girl, looking out for her lover, occupies the foreground relieved against the harbor-sky; it embodies the joy of danger passed. The stanzas that describe “the two pale sisters” of Baker’s Island lights, exhaust the imagery of guardianship against a perilous and betraying enemy which lies in wait for prey. In every instance, nearly, the sea is an object of fear; and even the boat, wreathed with bittersweet, dropping along the ledges and the sands, keeps well in-shore, with a shudder at last —

“Anchored in the dusk, a spell
From the folds of twilight fell
On the bay’s black, star-strewn floor;
Awe, with that weird glitter crept
Shuddering through our thoughts; we stept
Gladly on firm land once more.”

This is her mood — one of dread. Afterwards, when she had begun to go away from the sea-side, she acknowledged frankly that she preferred the scenery and companionship of the mountains, and with them she often spent her summers. But the mountains were to her a kind of spiritual landscape, nigh to heaven and kindred with an aspiring life; they never had, however, the human power of the ocean, never touched the common life so intimately and participated in it, for good or ill. The proof is that the mountains gave her no such poems as the "Wild Roses of Cape Ann." She saw the prairie, too, and lived on it, but she never won its secret. None of the poems are so outward — so of the eye, merely — as those in which she describes it, though she gives a few well-rendered bits, in "Elsie in Illinois": —

"Garden without path or fence,
Rolling up its billowy bloom
To her low, one-windowed room."

or, better still, the lines describing the husband coming home —

"Coming with the evening sky, —
Through the prairie, through the sky, —
Each as from eternity."

There is the spaciousness of the prairie and its nearness to the sky in that; but such touches are rare. So far as nature was concerned, she must be thought of as living between the two horizons of the mountains northward and the sea eastward, with a glimpse of the Merri-mac between. In rendering the outward aspects of this region she is at home, and she describes with equal power the two great features of the scene, with more delicacy than strength, but often with great beauty of atmosphere.

The second principle, that governed in her work, was sympathy with humble life. She was born of the people and she remained one of them. She worked for her living, first at Lowell, and though mill-life in those days seems like an anticipation of girls' colleges, still it was mill-life — work among the machines for a daily wage, and, throughout her life, she worked, as a teacher at school and then among her books as a writer; and it was always a frugal living that she earned, without superfluity, compelling simplicity in all things — the life of the common New England people. But such a life, humble and modest, has a saving grace, and of it she reaped the full beneficence. It breeds respect for others, and self-respect. It constitutes a bond with simple human lives, with the mass, by means of which sympathy expands and the knowledge of what is fundamental in worth grows plain. To be so near to others brings both opportunity and power of service; and Lucy Larcom, merely because she was one in this large community, won all the influence she ever had. Merely as an example, she affected many lives. It is impossible to conjecture how many a working girl, learning of her, has derived moral strength and mental impulse, and also patience, simply because such circumstances had once been shared by a woman who showed to all that womanhood was neither hurt in its finer qualities nor cheapened in others' eyes by such a life. Her poems, especially devoted to the praise of the working life, are not the most successful, but their spirit is democratic and inspiring to those who may find the burdens of daily labor heavy. She was careful to preserve her remembrance of her younger days and sympathy with this common life; and by means of this she gained her audience, which was always in the class to

which she belonged; and she was understood by them because she used the language of their experience. One curious result of this sympathy may be noticed by the way. In her poems she had a habit of praising the commonest flowers because they were many and humble and were content to bloom in every place.

"The weed, to him who loves it, is a flower —" is one of her quotations, and she had a certain tenderness for all weeds that could pass as flowers and wrote upon them, like neglected children of the roadside. It calls to mind one of Lincoln's great sayings: "I think God loves the plain people, because he made so many of them."

The third principle in this poetry, as a whole, is the moral and religious spirit of the community in which Lucy Larcom was bred. It made the first impression upon her, in childhood, through its hymns. She learned hundreds of them —

"The long, quaint words, the hum-drum rhyme,
The verse that reads like prose —"

as she herself describes them; but how deeply they influenced her is shown by other passages of the same poem in which she praises them with a fervor caught from themselves:—

"The psalm-tunes of the Puritan;
The hymns that dared to go
Down shuddering through the abyss of man,
His gulfs of conscious woe;
That scaled the utmost height of bliss
Where the veiled seraph sings,
And worlds unseen brought down to this
On music's mighty wings."

On the other hand, the doctrinal part of the Sunday service did not much engage her interest, or affect her

own poetic work. It did not enter into her mind in any vitalizing way. One, however, who was born with the literary gift, could not escape the intellectual influence in the New England sermon which constituted largely the mental life of the people; and in several ways she was formed by it. In particular she derived from this source the habit of finding a lesson in the fall of the sparrow and the cutting down of the grass, or, in other words, of moralizing nature. She never seems to care for beauty merely for its own sake, or, at least, such a mood was rare and subordinate in her life. She sought to ally the beauty of nature with some human association or some spiritual meaning, and to turn nature into parables.

"The universe is one great loving thought,
Writ in hieroglyphs of bud and bloom" —

she says; and, in detail, the rock that makes the rill break into murmuring sound becomes a symbol of the blessing of obstacles —

"The happy trouble of the rock
That makes her life a song";

and this is the usual method of allegory in her verse, which would afford hundreds of such examples. A second peculiarity, which was, at any rate, fostered by the literary characteristics of the New England sermon, is the habit of seeking short and condensed expressions of thought, like maxims or proverbs in style, but original. Such lines stand out in the verse; they are quotable lines; and are meant to stick in the mind. Her poems are full of them. Here are one or two characteristic examples:

"Said Psyche, Pain assures me that I live!"

"To stifle truth is to stop her breath."

"The threshold where our hopes begin to climb, is our horizon."

"I said it in the meadow path,
I say it on the mountain stairs; —
The best things any mortal hath
Are those which every mortal shares."

All this is in a moralizing strain, and illustrates also how her thoughts as well as her images were dominated by the mastery of that New England spirit which was absorbed in the moral life on one hand and in religious life upon the other. But she did not owe her religious thoughts directly to the elder Puritanism from which she derived her moral and intellectual cast of mind.

These three strands, then, the sea with its poetic suggestions, humble life with its understanding sympathies, and the preoccupation of the New England mind with morality and the spiritual meaning of nature, are the material of which Lucy Larcom's poems are woven. She thus pictures and expresses the inward life and outward circumstances of the people, whose traditions she inherited and whose ideals she accepted. She was deeply attracted to the soil she sprang from, and loved the landscape and those whose figures and lives were blended with it; but it was the landscape and the people of the older town of her childhood that she idealized in her verse, and thus left a poetic transcript of it in her book which we should be very grateful for, inasmuch as it gives to our past, in some sense, the transforming and perpetuating touch of literature, and unites us with the few other towns of the country that have been thus fortunate. What this older life meant to her, and how to her eyes it was made up of the elements already mentioned, so blended as to be inextricably one, is best shown, perhaps — to take a

single instance — in the closing lines of the "Wild Roses of Cape Ann":

"Thank God for those old-fashioned sea-side folk,
And for the home that rooted their strong lives
For many generations. Virtues far
Out-perfuming the rose, — pure souls, untouched
By the world's frosty standards, — are not these
True growths of our New England atmosphere,
By rarest of exotics unreplaced?
Strangers have found that landscape's beauty out,
And hold its deeds and titles. But the waves
That wash the quiet shores of Beverly,
The winds that gossip with the waves, the sky
That immemorially blends, listening,
Have reminiscences that still assert
Inalienable claims from those who won,
By sweat of their own brows, this heritage."

It was thus that in her principal poetic works she said farewell to the old home.

And here I might end; but all would miss something which, everywhere present in her book, has been unmentioned. I mean the spiritual instinct in it, that element which was in her far stronger than the merely poetic impulse, overbore it, as life went on, and in the end displaced it. The verses which she wrote in early life are the most popular and widest known among her own people, and they are, poetically, the best — most fresh, most original, most disengaged from any ulterior purpose beyond the simple poem itself. As she grew older, the purely human, the individual and dramatic element, as it is shown in "Hannah" and "A Sea-Glimpse," gave way more and more to the reflective and moral mood, and finally that mood itself became completely spiritualized, and she ended as a poet of purely religious moods. It

has already been said that this progress and growth in her was not directly due to the elder Puritanism. Yet, at first, she received her ideal of life from that source, and to her that ideal in its practical form was the application of a rather stern conscience to rather hard work — a laborious life of duty as it came. But on the imaginative side, on the side that looks for a strip of blue sky over the plowed field, and the sea-furrows, she was obliged to seek elsewhere for horizon and prospect. She found them at last in books, — in volumes that in her generation suffered a new birth out of old time, in the works of Tauler, the German mystic, and Plato, the Greek idealist, and others of grave and reverend names, then, in the time of Emerson, much on the lips of young women of growing and ambitious minds. But, in her own case, she found her nearest guides in the sermons of Maurice and Robertson. The least thoughtful reader of her works must have been struck by her great capacity to enjoy and appreciate life — mere living. The lines with which she closes the full-voiced and resonant "Thanksgiving Hymn" —

"For thine own great gift of Being
I thank thee, O my God —"

might serve as a descriptive motto of all her works, so constant is the spirit of joyfulness in life that inspires them. She especially sympathized with the vast energies of nature's vitality, and felt the contagion of it —

"Making it joy to think of swelling buds,
And fruit, slow-ripening on the apple-trees,
And young birds fledging in the robin's nest."

She felt this current in the outward world, this stream

of unexhausted being, and she thought of it with Wordsworth's faith —

"That every flower that grows
Enjoys the air it breathes."

This was the world without. But the inward force within herself, and in man, the life of conscious and aspiring being, was even more deeply realized by her as an object of awe and mystery. On the one side was nature, on the other the soul; but if she heard in that elder Puritanism the voice of the Psalmist declaring God in his works, and the voice of the Apostle declaring Christ in man, they were not convincing voices which should seem the expression of her own experience. There was a gladness in her thoughts of life, in both of these great manifestations, that needed a different atmosphere to grow in, and she found it in Maurice and Robertson through whom she came in contact with the most spiritual and personal religious thought of the English world and her thoughts then began to take on that spiritual reality, that direct experience of enlightenment and enthusiasm within, in which, doubtless, she was also much sustained and reassured by her friendship with Whittier, whose "faith had center everywhere, nor cared to fix itself to form." Thus she led by herself her own life with her own thoughts; and, still meditating, came finally to identify the energy of life in nature and in man with a spiritual power working out its will in both. In three stanzas she condensed this conclusion, and her aspiration with respect to that power:—

"O Life that breathest in all sweet things
That bud and bloom upon the earth,
That fillest the sky with song and wings,
That walkest the world through human birth;

O Life that lightest in every man
A spark of thine own being's flame,
And wilt that spark to glory fan,—
Our listening souls would hear that name.

Thou art the Eternal Christ of God,
The Life unending, unbegun;
The Deity brightening through the cloud;
The Presence of the Invisible One."

With such convictions, arrived at through conscientious years of thought and growth, she could not but feel her tasks in life absorbed in the one labor of endeavoring to share with others the experience which was her own, in these regions of truth and emotion, and so moved now also by the strong influence of her later friendship with Bishop Brooks, she had already entered on her work as a religious guide and teacher, when her death came. Her books on these themes, in prose, were more widely scattered abroad and were, perhaps, more influential in life, than her poems had ever been, and among her poems, except in our neighborhood and the homes of those who care for New England with special warmth, the longest-lived will be her hymns and the other religious verses of these last years.

Such, at least to my eyes, was the life of the woman whose portrait now looks down on us from these walls; and it is well that the first thus to be hung upon them with ceremony, is that of one so deserving of that remembrance which it is our main object, as a Society, to secure and perpetuate. It was a life well lived. And yet, after all, the significant thing in it is not that she caught the beauty of these fields and woods, and the sea that we look on by day and night, and strove to make them poetical ground; not that she praised the lowly life and

the virtues that inhere in it and illustrated them in herself with simplicity and power; not that she used the flowers of our wayside for parables, and shaped those close-cut sentences that carry home to the heart the truths by which daily life is led; not even that she found inspiration for herself and friendly aid for others in a life-long religious meditation; but rather that she showed, in the total unity of her life and work, that the pursuit of an ideal, however conceived, is the surest pledge that a life shall be nobly led itself, and have greatest utility to others. Her sense of the great blessing of life, of the duty to develop it to the utmost of one's capacity for living in mind and heart as well as in the body, gives a ring to every line in which she urges the soul onward —

“Climb for the white flower of thy dream!”

ON THE DEATH OF HOLMES

THE death of Oliver Wendell Holmes closed many careers in one end. His versatility was such that one hesitates whether to speak first of the man of society, or the literary wit, or the practitioner, or the novelist, or the poet. This diversity sprang rather from the different employments to which he put his mind than from the various richness of natural genius. It was in some degree the product of the influences of the city, which operate upon men of education to bring out their whole capacity. He was from his breeding both academic and urban; and he carried out to the end the early aims and ambitions which thrive in the centers of learning and society. He was one of that rare class of minds to which their environment is not a limitation. He harmonized with the conditions of living into which he was born, with the settled order of old Boston, old Harvard, and the Saturday Club; and as he made the most of them, they made the most of him. The identity between himself, as a literary personality, and Boston was the largest part of his good fortune. He was that best sort of a representative of his city, a growth out of its previous society, traditions, and prejudices. The exclusiveness which made him prefer a man of family was a part of his genius; the same feeling, with a difference, made him prefer his own town to the rest of the universe; and thus it was not by accident, but by right of nature, that he should be the official poet of Harvard, which filled a larger relative

place in Boston life than in these days, and the loyal laureate of his city to salute, to toast, and to bid farewell to the guests whom it most honored. It would be unjust, nevertheless, to refer to him now solely or mainly as a poet. He succeeded quite as well in the use of his other talents, and these helped largely in establishing the reputation of his later days. The scientific element, even in his books, is a constant quantity; it colors his novels and often gives glow to his stanzas, and in his printed conversations over the table it is ever at hand for illustration. His wit, too, and those felicities of which he learned the secret in private talk with his friends, are ingredients never lacking. He must be regarded as poet, professor, and autocrat at once, if one would have a rounded conception of him, and understand what sort of personal power in him it was that extended a local reputation over a continent.

When one reviews his life, perhaps the most obvious trait of it is its apparent lack of change. It is true that his literary career did not really begin until he was well on in middle life; he came forward then with a mature and well-stored mind, and the great impression he made was due to the self-repression which had allowed him to come at last full-handed and with his thoughts and manner unstaled. It would have been remarkable if his literary talent had suffered any serious modification after such a success so late in life. But as a poet he had been precocious, and there are very many of his verses, upon all sorts of occasions and in several styles, which were produced in the earlier years of his manhood; and in these there is the same quality, somewhat less highly developed, perhaps, as in the last lines from his pen. He had never attempted the modern style in poetry; there

are no "native wood-notes wild" in his range, nothing in "the pastoral line," nothing of Keats or the later romanticists; he was from the start a poet of society, and he found it convenient and perhaps necessary to continue in the somewhat mechanical measures of the past, which are best fitted for artificial and occasional verse.

Apart from the fact that Dr. Holmes adopted and retained these simple and prosaic measures, one other circumstance possibly tended to stiffen his early choice and practice into the gyves of habit. Most of his verses were not merely recited, but were written for recitation. The poet kept in mind the appeal to the audience necessary for success, the momentary stroke, the immediate flash of appreciation, the mixture of humor and epigrammatic eloquence, most effective to the ear of an assembly; and to secure these ends the Queen Anne forms of verse are the best adapted. His employment as a poet of occasions, no doubt, had its effect in accustoming him to write from an intellectual and social impulse out of which the poetry of the nineteenth century does not spring. There is little to show, however, that he had any lyrical gift of the higher order. His vigorous faculty was the intellect; with it were something of sentiment and much of humor, which, blending with the strong mental element, resulted in poetry in which every line is masculine. The extraordinary success which Dr. Holmes had in adhering to an antiquated form of verse is due to its admirable fitness to be the vehicle of his mind. He discovered this correspondence between his thought and his measure, his occasion and his instrument, early in his career; and to the end of his days the range of his poetry remained the same. It is not likely that it was limited by the narrow compass of his verse forms; rather, the two coincided.

The conservatism observable in his poetry was characteristic of his entire nature. Even when he was liberal, it was with a Toryish spirit. He felt strongly upon a few points. He was never at a loss for a word in favor of liberal theology, and one of his favorite modes of praise was by means of censure of the old school. He was, during the war, a strong Unionist, and his stanzas of the time are remarkable now for the heat of their rhetoric, aglow with the intense feeling of the hour; but he did not often use his metrical gifts for controversy. On the other hand, his conservatism supplied him with admirable powers of resistance. He was proof against whatever did not fall in with his habits of thought and standards of judgment. In these there was a certain admixture of tradition. Along his own lines, however, he developed with steady gains of power and touch. Some of his later poems rank with the best of an earlier time in literary skill and in their own charm. The "Autocrat," which marks the maturity of his faculties, is his richest work in both prose and verse. It exhibits a mind with various powers in admirable composition working harmoniously and easily together. It shows both weakness and strength. One would have inferred, from the handling of the little romance in its pages, that there would be some uncertainty and awkwardness in the author's storytelling when he should come to the making of novels. Its greatest attraction lies in the personality of the talker, who was able under this fiction to give expression to his discursive mind, to use those unexpected but apt comparisons, and to announce those paradoxes, which belong to the fine art of conversation, to expose his hobbies, and to exploit his scientific knowledge—in a word, to surrender his mind into his readers' hands. Dr. Holmes,

to every one who read this volume, immediately became like a familiar figure on the street; he had found the way to make the acquaintance of men and women whom he did not meet directly, and he did it so successfully that he became at once an old friend; it is as the "Autocrat" that he is still most often referred to and best known. In the later volumes of the series there was the same sense of immediate communication between author and reader. The popularity of all these monologues among men of affairs was very remarkable. The vitality, acuteness, and originality of statement, the incisive and absolute manner, and the intermittent humor which were the distinguishing marks of the author, were of themselves sufficient to account for this, but something was due to the rarity of the sensation. It is not often that a man of mature years and such admirable social equipment writes a book for the entertainment of his fellows in the same spirit in which he would sit down to talk with his friends, and discusses with them things in general. It requires, moreover, some experience in growing old to appreciate the flavor of the style. One may observe in Dr. Holmes's later prose, as in his poetry, the absence of any change in his quality or form. There is in his very last papers an even more intimate mode of address, and perhaps a mellower temper, natural to old age such as he was fortunate enough to enjoy; but this is only what years will do for a good vintage.

As a man of letters Dr. Holmes has the wide scope here briefly touched; but it is, perhaps, rather as a man of his time that he will be remembered. Even now a large part of his reputation rests upon other grounds than his books. His personality counts perceptibly in his popularity. He is, too, a part of the past of Boston.

Merely to turn over the pages of his poems reminds us with how large a portion of the literary life of the city in his period he was in close contact. He was himself, as has been remarked, an inheritor of the old Phi Beta Kappa poets as a recitationist, and he is the last of the line. The titles of his biographies recall his close association with Motley and Emerson, and the number of his elegies upon learned or literary friends is very large. There are few prominent Boston names of his century that are not beaded somewhere upon his verse, and his tributes to them have often been noble words. With the great occasions of the city, the days of the entertainment of distinguished guests, he had been as constantly associated. Few foreigners of note were then in Boston without taking his hand. In the social and intellectual life of the city he held for fifty years a leading place, and made his memory long in local annals. He had indeed extended a local reputation over a continent; but in becoming famous he did not cease to be local. It was as a Bostonian that he was known. His attachment to the city was great enough to keep him there for the half-century between his student days and his old age; and his flattering literary and social reception in England, late in life, did not tempt him to recross the Atlantic in quest of fresh honors. It is not without reason, therefore, that his city has been so faithful to him. Among the group of literary men with whom he associated there are names destined to a longer brilliancy, and their works have been of larger measure; but among them there is none who in life was the source of more pleasure to the social gatherings of college and city, or used his talents with more faithfulness, making them serviceable within their range. He belongs to old Boston now—an historical period of the city that cannot be recalled without his name.

LOWELL'S ADDRESSES

I

AN essay is the freest, an address one of the most enslaving, forms of literary expression. The speaker is subject to the moment, with all that appanage of accident and circumstance which has so commanding an influence in determining what words are fit then and there; and, although an orator gains often from the concentration of life in a memorable hour and makes it the very stuff of his triumph, the man of letters seldom finds any compensation of this sort possible to him. Such considerations prepare one for what seems a lack of customary freedom in some of the occasional speeches of Mr. Lowell, and for a novel attitude of the author, which may be expressed by saying that he does not talk with you, as he was wont to do, but at you. Tact is an admirable quality, and when one must observe so many and various amenities as a foreign minister who enters into the intellectual and social life of a great nation, it is of incalculable utility; but the necessity to employ it is an inconvenience to the thinker.

In the address which Lowell made before the Wordsworth Society, for example, his position as the retiring president was evidently an embarrassment to him as a critic, and the windings he makes, not, like Burke, into his subject, but out of it, are a lesson how to tell the truth without making a martyr of one's self, which the most skilled master of literary fence might lay to heart. In

the Harvard address, on the contrary, the constraint of the hour was evidenced by the complete liberty of speech which he sensibly accorded to himself: as one in the house of his friends, he magnanimously determined to say his say, irrespective of who might be critical, sure of amiable tolerance if not of cordial agreement. But in an essay he would not have apologized for plain-speaking. The moral is this: that however successful these addresses were, and however delightful in themselves, let us not be flattered into believing that the man of letters can be so admirable as a speaker as he is as a writer, or is ever in so favorable an element as when he is composing a book for the fit audience, though few, which is impanelled silently year after year.

This warning springs from a natural jealousy for Lowell's literary fame. The address, nevertheless, has proved a fruitful form of expression for his later thought. One would not say that he was in earlier writings characteristically discursive, but the extraordinary fullness of his mind and the restless spontaneity of its action make him seem so. This copiousness was always his, and age has brought a mellower ripeness and more of charm. For a man whose mental wealth is so constituted, and who yet has never shown a disposition to reduce and systematize thought, any literary form which takes the surplusage of the mind and holds it, is sure to be serviceable. These various addresses are less a reasoned criticism of books or life or institutions than the overflow of an opulent mind. The old knowledge how to quote still stands him in good stead, as when he repels Carlyle's sneer that "America meant only roast turkey every day for everybody" by the home-thrust, "he forgot that states, as Bacon said of wars, go on their bellies." The poetic touch,

too, is as swift and tender as ever, as in the line concerning the ancient quiet of Oxford, that "the very stones seemed happier for being there," and in the dozen other perfect sentences which, like

"—— captain jewels in the carcanet,"

are "thinly placed" in the Harvard address, and of which the tribute to Theocritus is one that shines in the memory. But to point out such matters as these is superfluous, in the same way as to review what is said of Fielding or Cervantes. It is of interest, however, to inquire what is the general temper of mind in these addresses—what things Lowell has finally found to be of most worth in literature and in life.

In the first rank stands the query, What does Lowell think of America? Those who listened to him at Birmingham, when he spoke on "Democracy," heard him more simply as an American than his auditors here can do: he was a Minister standing for the institutions of his country in their eyes, and justifying them in a speech peculiarly difficult to make because his topic was all but a political issue in the practical sphere. Here the case was different, and public curiosity was alive to his words rather because he was the most eminent representative of that group of cultivated men who are commonly believed, and not without grounds, to distrust democratic institutions and to look askance upon the power of the masses. There can be no doubt that Lowell had faith in our national destiny, as perfect as was ever possessed by a patriot aware of dangers, yet supremely confident of mastery over them. The basis of this belief is nowhere made apparent in the addresses as it lies deep in those foundations of reverence, of trust in divine purpose, of patriotic

and humanitarian sentiment, of emotions strongly stirred in the war time—in a word, it lies, where alone all faith is justified, in character. The address on "Democracy" does not help one much who seeks the why of the orator's conviction, though it illustrates the course of his thought when it is exercised upon the subject of popular government in general. It is not a profound and full exposition of the democratic principle. It has rather the consecutiveness of life than the sequence of logic, as indeed Lowell himself conceived it, when he announced his purpose to speak from "some experimental knowledge derived from the use of such eyes and ears as Nature had been pleased to endow me with." He told his Birmingham hearers what he had observed in the working of his home institutions, spoke of Lincoln and Emerson, who each bore authentically the mold of the democratic spirit, and other things of note; and he drove home this report of things known to him from experience by many weighty maxims drawn from the higher region of philosophy, or thought applied to the general conditions of human life. The sanity of his remarks is the most striking of their qualities; they are altogether free from panic, a liability to which is the political weakness of culture, and they thus keep proportion marvelously. It is with a brief and almost careless stroke that he brushes aside a whole host of confusion when he says: "The last thing we need be anxious about is property." In meeting the objection that to arrive at truth by a count of hands is a transparent absurdity, there is something like humor in his admission of it, while at the same time he points out that in politics it is not truth that is to be arrived at, but a working arrangement; and the count of hands which now prevails as a method of decision is rightly contrasted, not with

the balance of wisdom in that never-existing republic where philosophers are kings, but with the historic methods of count of pikes, count of stars and garters, count of dollars. The way in which the speculative intellect, in dealing with questions of suffrage and civil equality, misses the point, through a lack of the political habit of mind, was never more cheerfully exposed. The maxim that it is not the Rights, but the Wrongs of men that make all the trouble, is phrased and rephrased as one shapes glowing metal with strokes of the hammer; and no part of the rational groundwork of democracy is slighted.

It is not in these matters, which belong to the past of accomplished fact with us, that the most interesting part of the political spirit of Lowell lies, for Americans; but in those sentences which look to the future, which deal with wealth and poverty, with the means of satisfying desires which democracy has created, with the possibility of modifying those conditions which are the source of suffering and injustice to the common people, and like themes. He knows the large proportion of woe and want that springs from human nature, and is irremediable except by the regeneration of the individual, but he thinks that something of the burden on the lower orders of mankind is due to defective social arrangements. He is quite sensible of the place of wealth in sustaining society, of its beneficence, and of the increase of conscience in its holders; but he says sharply that wealth bears those burdens "which can most easily be borne, but poverty pays with its person the chief expenses of war, pestilence, and famine," and adds that all the vast charity of well-meaning and laborious philanthropists in the expenditure of money is no more than "as if we should apply plasters

to a single pustule of the smallpox with a view of driving out the disease." The bearing of this view of the relative positions of wealth and poverty under conditions which admit of change, is too wide-reaching to be followed out here. The whole course of thought seems to come to its head in his remarks upon Henry George, whose political economy he parries with a witticism, but affirms that he "is right in his impelling motives"; and, not fearful of words, he continues, with a disclaimer of communism on the one hand and of State socialism on the other, "but socialism means, or wishes to mean, coöperation and community of interests, sympathy, the giving to the hands not so large a share as to the brains, but a larger share than hitherto in the wealth they must combine to produce—means, in short, the practical application of Christianity to life, and has in it *the secret of an orderly and benign reconstruction.*"

The second point which is to be reckoned lies in the literary field. It is no news to say that Mr. Lowell is an idealist. It is, nevertheless, worth emphasizing; partly because he is the fittest to be called as a witness of any public man, and partly because he himself emphasizes the fact strenuously. There is no form of the older criticism that he does not use to give wings or weight, as the case may be, to his words. He draws the distinction as markedly now as in years gone by between the imagination and the understanding, and classifies authors as in one or the other realm. He believes as unreservedly as ever in the higher worth of the imagination, and in its higher function. Coleridge, he says, taught the English mind "to recognize in the imagination an important factor not only in the happiness but in the destiny of man"; and he does but develop Coleridge and those who fed the

mind of Coleridge originally, when he says elsewhere, "The most vivid sensations of which our moral and intellectual nature is capable are received through the imagination," or, "We hold all the deepest, all the highest satisfactions of life as tenants of the imagination." He is careful, too, to remind us that when imagination allies itself "as best it may" with the understanding, only lower ends are possible to it. Again, he defines the world of the imagination as "not the world of abstraction and nonentity, as some conceive, but a world formed out of chaos by a sense of the beauty that is in man and the earth on which he dwells." He elucidates the subject further by repeating once more the old idea that the imagination deals with the type. Thus, of Cervantes's characters: "They are not so much taken from life as informed with it; . . . not the matter-of-fact work of a detective's watchfulness, products of a quick eye and a faithful memory, but the true children of the imaginative faculty, from which all the dregs of observation and memory have been distilled away, leaving only what is elementary and universal." And if the reader has patience for another quotation, the character of pure literature—of that cast, as he would say, in the *forma mentis eterna*—was never more nobly and exactly described than where he writes of its works as "those in which intellect, infused with the sense of beauty, aims rather to produce delight than conviction, or, if conviction, then through intuition rather than formal logic, and leaving what Donne wisely calls

‘Unconcerning things matter of fact’

to science and the understanding, seeks to give ideal expression to those abiding realities of the spiritual world

for which the outward and visible world serves at best but as the husk and symbol." In that sentence lies the whole organon of the higher criticism. If one masters it, he is a graduate of literary art, and there is no department of the works of creative genius to which he does not hold the key of interpretation. But a view of the art of literature which is so pronounced and so frankly set forth by the only critic of the highest rank that our country has ever produced, does not call for more than statement; one need only note the principles of his criticism, and dwell on the prominence he gives to the imagination, on his old-fashioned adherence to the doctrine that the type is the only thing real in an exact sense, and that art consists in identifying the individual with the type, which is the peculiar faculty of genius—its creativeness.

These are the two most noticeable traits of the ripened convictions of Lowell as made known in this volume—the democratic and the idealistic temper in forms of extraordinary purity. It is evident that he believed in the gods who had fashioned his own clay, and he wished their power to continue over new generations, because he had experienced its enlightening and civilizing influence in his own life-long culture. At the Harvard Commemoration he was defending his own masters who had brought him to such happy issues of thought, and pleading that the nurture of our youth be still intrusted to those humane studies which were the fecundating intellectual principle of modern civilization. It was natural for him, it was well-nigh a filial duty, to take this view. But have not four centuries of compulsory classical study in our institutions of learning incorporated the immortal part of the ancient culture in our general intellectual life as closely as the Judean religious impulse has entered

into our common spiritual life, so that special training in the Latin and Greek may safely be left to the literary class as Hebrew to the clerical class? Plutarch is an inspiring author for the young and strengthening to the mature; but that American whom Lowell singled out as "one of Plutarch's men," and who alone of our countrymen could support that simple and heroic phrase, was not indebted to "insolent Greece or haughty Rome" for one tittle of his personal greatness. Was that very one whose literary fame braved the classical tradition in that audacious line of Jonson's eulogy—was Shakespeare so deeply obliged, in any direct way, to antiquity by virtue of his "small Latin and less Greek"? And as a sign of how wide the stream of Virgil's speech has spread abroad, it may be mentioned that Lowell quotes often from Dante, but neglects Dante's master. Has not the work of the Renaissance been accomplished? Our culture is so permeated with the old wisdom, so articulated with classical canons, so informed with rationality that the new birth of learning may be regarded as complete; one draws on the ancient fountain-head whenever he taps a modern literature, and thereby the necessity of an original acquaintance with the classics for every man who aspires to be liberally educated, is greatly lessened if not destroyed. For the very few who may hope to reach any distinction in refinement, leaders in culture, the men of letters and of art, interested mainly only in the best things produced by the spirit of man, the training by which Lowell had been molded will still be needful; it is got, not in colleges, but in the private study. Professors cannot give it, for it is self-imposed, and, after all, it is less a discipline than an inner growth. In what worth of substance it results, in what attractive charm of manner, in what

universal efficacy of thought, these addresses illustrate, by the impression they make of both the quality and volume of the settled and habitual wisdom of which they are so partial and fragmentary a record. They are a better defense of the rights of humane study than any advocate could frame. The best moral is implicit in things, not explicit in words; and in this volume there is the authentic impress of the classical spirit—age seasons every page, and yet every page is young.

II

The country may justly take pride in the temper and quality of these speeches, which display national as well as personal excellences, and will be the lasting record of Lowell's life abroad, as a representative American. But more than the variety of theme and circumstance in the contents of this volume, its unity of spirit, its single-mindedness, are forced upon the reader's attention: not that it is characterized by sameness of idea, — on the contrary, it is perpetually changeful in thought, — or by any scheme or system which of itself organizes a man's knowledge always in the same general lines, and is thus the source of a merely formal and specious coherency; nor that it has any one end in view, any defined purpose, or recurring moral, or proselytizing tendency, even; but in it one perceives everywhere the presence of culture transmuted into character, knowledge that has suffered the immortalizing change into wisdom, judgments that share in the permanency of things because derived from long-established traditions and the whole intellectual and social habit of the race, — in brief, one sees the same

mind in it all, completely developed, consistent, and fortified in its principles.

This mind is preëminently that of a man of letters. Literature, in the exact sense, has been its nutriment. The largest part of what Mr. Lowell has to say, too, pertains to literature. It is true that the greater portion is strictly criticism, though somewhat affected in its form and bearing by the circumstance that it was spoken, and must be read by the ear as well as by the eye; but it is more than criticism, as generally understood, because the decisions do not apply merely to the special author in hand, but have a wider relation to authorship itself; not to books alone, but also to the spiritual life which it is the office of books to quicken, strengthen, and perfect. Lowell may be writing of some individual, and have only him in mind; but it frequently happens that a slightly accented sentence, what seems perhaps a simple remark by the way, is a text for a long sermon, if the reader will follow out its suggestions. Sometimes Lowell's suppression of this implicit homily appears to be against his will. He, as a man of letters, necessarily places a high value upon literary form; wisdom by itself is less prized apart — to use his own phrase — from "the beauty in which it is incarnated"; and for a poet to fail of this incarnating beauty, he is well assured, is a defect in the very substance and tissue of genius. With the growth of popular education, there has lately come an effort to make analysis do the work of intuition in the study of literature; because the eye cannot see what the poet has embodied, it is fancied that the dissecting hand can make the soul apparent; but what is thus arrived at is truth, in its philosophical, not its poetic form. The method has its advantages, no doubt, and one would not depreciate

its worth; in particular, it is a great boon to poets who in considerable portions of their work have not expressed the truth with such perfection that it can be perceived at first sight; that is, to poets who have failed, at times, in that "incarnating beauty" which belongs to the ever-living works of genius. Students of Wordsworth know very well that he is often sensible when he is not poetic, but his devotees are slow to recognize and acknowledge the fact that at such times his poems have not the principle of life in them which makes real literature survive, and constitutes its reality. To think all of Wordsworth, or any very large proportion of his literary remains, to be literature is to confuse the mind's sense of relative values; to set up a standard of meaning in place of the old standard of style is to abolish the distinction of prose and verse, of philosophy and poetry; and to substitute for the creative artist that merely percipient creature who is called the Seer. Lowell made many a downright stroke, in his address to the Wordsworth Society, which must have seemed to the poet's more devout worshipers as if their idol were having his hands and feet lopped off; but the most significant word, the unkindest cut of all, when one sees how deep it sinks into the marrow, is a hardly noticeable sentence slipping gravely in at the end of a paragraph: "There are various methods of criticism; but I think we should all agree that literary work is to be judged from the purely literary point of view." Who would not assent to so obvious a truism? But what becomes of Wordsworthians in general, what becomes of the modern sect of the Browningites, if literary work is "to be judged from the purely literary point of view"? It is to escape from the literary point of view and its limitations that meaning is made the test of value, indepen-

dent of style, and the gown of the scholar usurps the honors due alone to the poet's laurel. It is well to be understood; the now popular method of study may feed the mind, may open the inner truth of the author and multiply its usefulness as thought, and no doubt does this excellent service; but shall the foolish therefore imagine that lucid expression is not elemental in the work of genius, or that any poetry which lacks it is of enduring power? A man of letters is naturally impatient of the intrusion of foreign standards upon the domain of literature, and must at least "hesitate" his dissent, as Lowell has here done.

There is a good deal in these addresses, as a whole, which must be classed as dissent; for in many respects Lowell stands against a rising tide. Is it to be inferred that he represents the times that were, in literary criticism and in his conviction of what nurture is best for the souls of men? Certainly it is to be feared that Coleridge, to whose spiritualizing influence he regards the English mind as much indebted, is little read, less consulted, and perhaps scarcely understood by those who rule the hour among us. It would not be venturing much to intimate that younger men will learn more of the great critical authority of their fathers from this speech, on unveiling his bust in the Abbey, than they ever knew from Coleridge's own works. The trend of our time is toward the lowlands of the understanding, so Lowell seems to think; is toward the region of observation and record, toward the science of what the senses report, and that portraiture of the material which is comprehensively termed realism. To dwell on the merits of Coleridge, to expound the methods of Cervantes in creation, or, nearer at hand, to point to Fielding's way, is to prefer the Old Comedy to

the New, in our Athens. Some one may irreverently suggest that, though Coleridge no doubt did a good turn in importing Germany, it is Russia that we need now; and Cervantes, — was he not a romantic writer, perhaps? As for Fielding, why, he lived long before Thackeray and Dickens, even! Irreverence might go so far, for what head among us but quails beneath the truncheon of realism? Yet when he was over-seas Lowell told the workingmen to whom he read his notes on "Don Quixote" that when he entered the company of the realistic school he felt "set to grind in the prison-house of the Philistines. I walk about in a nightmare, the supreme horror of which is that my coat is all button-holed for bores to thrust their fingers through, and bait me to my heart's content." And he goes on to speak of ancient worthies, like that impossible Hector, and Roland with his ridiculous horn, and Macbeth in the old witch-story, and others of the same kind of beings, who "move about, if not in worlds not realized, at least in worlds not realized to any eye but that of imagination, a world far from police reports, a world into which it is a privilege, I might almost say an achievement, to enter." Our irreverent critic will, perhaps, not dispute the alleged habitat of these romantic heroes, but as to the privilege and achievement of entering there he will be more skeptical. Lowell belongs to the idealists, and it is too much to expect that he should take a more modern view; he has been so shaped and inspired by the old culture that he is loyal to it as to the blood and spirit of the fathers; and the old culture is, beyond gainsaying, idealistic, from Homer and David down to the birth of Zola. It could scarcely be hoped that a man to whom literature as it has been is the breath of his spiritual being should revoke old-time judgments,

and decree anew in favor of literature as we make it. Such charitable consideration will be allowed to a veteran of criticism, no doubt, by the most modern school; but he can hardly look for more than tolerance. Is it, then, so true that to get away from our neighbors we must seek Plutarch? Can one not converse with the spirit except in Dante? And after all, would it be so very much wiser to stay with our neighbors, and disbelieve in heroes of an older type; to deny the spirit, and give our days and nights to the jargon of French fish-wives and the slang of the American street? Lowell observes, "We are apt to wonder at the scholarship of the men of three centuries ago, and at a certain dignity of phrase that characterizes them. They were scholars, because they did not read so many things as we. They had fewer books, but these were of the best. Their speech was noble, because they lunched with Plutarch and supped with Plato." There is "a certain dignity of phrase" that characterizes this volume also, such as has not been noticeable in any American book for a long time. Is not the reason, in its degree, the same, and may it not be that the old culture is still justified of her children? Three centuries hence, if any should care to examine the literature of this decade, will they not explain Lowell's preëminence, in weight, closeness, and beauty of phrase in somewhat the same way? If this should prove so, the realists may well ponder that admirable quotation which is so forcibly flung down before the feet of those who forget "the warning of Sir Walter Raleigh, perhaps more important to the artist than to the historian, that it is dangerous to follow truth too near the heels." As a matter of minor criticism, there is a passing remark upon Spanish literature: speaking of the "flavor of the soil," he says, "It has the advantage of

giving even to second-class writers in a foreign language that strangeness which in our own tongue is possible only to originality either of thought or style." Does not this indicate the mistake of perspective that is made by those who are loud in the praise of foreign books?

Dissents of other kinds are to be found in these pages. It is not a bird-bolt shot into the air, when the critic of Fielding turns upon those who find that author intolerably gross with the rejoinder that "the second of the seven deadly sins is not less dangerous when she talks mysticism, and ogles us through the gaps of a fan painted with the story of the virgin martyr." This sentence lays bare the most offensive weakness of the esthetic school. It would be ungracious to dwell only upon the points of disagreement which the author reveals between his perception of what is and his judgment of what ought to be. How many and various they are may be known from the examples which have been cited; but were they much more numerous, and the rifts of severance as wide as they are profound, — which is by no means the case, — the author would remain an optimist; in the midst of his most destructive critical reservations he would seem only a wiser, not a less sincere and reverential, worshiper; in the full flow of his protest, whether against realism, or the new education, or what not, he would interpose a compliment of Spanish largeness, and confirm his audience in their conviction of the general cheerfulness of the outlook. If Lowell does not readily acquiesce with all the powers that be, he believes in those that are to be. He will not despair of the republic of letters, or that of democracy either. To his view there are apparently darker clouds in the literary than in the political horizon; but, however that may turn out, he is certainly more in

harmony with current thought in what he has to say of our institutions and society, of the national experience of democracy, and of the progressive and humanizing elements in our social theory than he is in his discussions of education or of the laws of literary art. If his dissents in the one division are instructive, no less are his assents in the other. He could not profess more explicitly adherence to the democratic principle as the basis of a greater and more equal public welfare in the state than any nation has hitherto known, as the promise of a prosperity to be still more widely distributed among the common people, and as a means of regeneration in the life of the poor. He more than adheres to the political faith in which the nation is built, — his acceptance of it goes to the point of advocacy.

The leading address in this volume, that on democracy, is the work of an exceptionally wise and subtle observer. It does not take pains to sustain democracy upon the ground of its foundations in equity, in utility, and the manifest destiny which history reveals to the student; rather, it maintains the practical working of it against objections which are deeply lodged only in the prejudices, self-conceit, and fears of a cultivated class, and dwells upon its inevitable success and its humanitarian spirit. Lowell is not one of the weaklings of philanthropy. He had such object-lessons in mania before him in his youth, and the half-century in which his life had been thrown had been so thick with reforms that he was not to be captured by any cause at this late day. He refers more than once to those whose sympathies are so touched by some single case of suffering that they fail to perceive the regulative law, to those who cannot see the crime because the criminal's person intervenes, and to other classes whose

sensibilities are more developed than their judgments. He himself sees with perfect clearness a definitely constituted world, whose conditions may be hard but are fixed, and also a something which the theologians used to call man's heart, the prolific source of evil, suffering, and pain; and he is well aware that all human life goes on, as one might say, between these upper and nether grindstones of Nature and Human Nature; he does not look for any philanthropy to change this constitution of things. It is a welcome sight when one whose hold is so firm on the facts of human existence nevertheless suggests and apparently believes that the organization of society is subject to considerable human improvement, and not a part of that order with which man has nothing to do but to submit to it. The value of such suggestion and belief depends upon the kind of change which the writer deems possible and desirable. Lowell does not express himself very fully upon the matter, but he seems willing to follow the idea of democracy into its developments with that optimistic feeling which has already been remarked upon. A careful reader will observe a thorough-going sympathy with the effort of the poor, the humble and homely classes who do the physical work of the world, to obtain a larger share of the fruits of the common toil; and also he may notice a cordial disposition of mind toward the purposes and spirit at least of some of those who aim at this result through social changes. One should not put an undue emphasis upon his words, but it is not too much to say that he shows a mind open and hospitable to those reforms of the future which democracy seems to carry in itself as premises contain a conclusion.

RECEIVED

[illegible]

814
W851.1i

3 3768 00104 9983

